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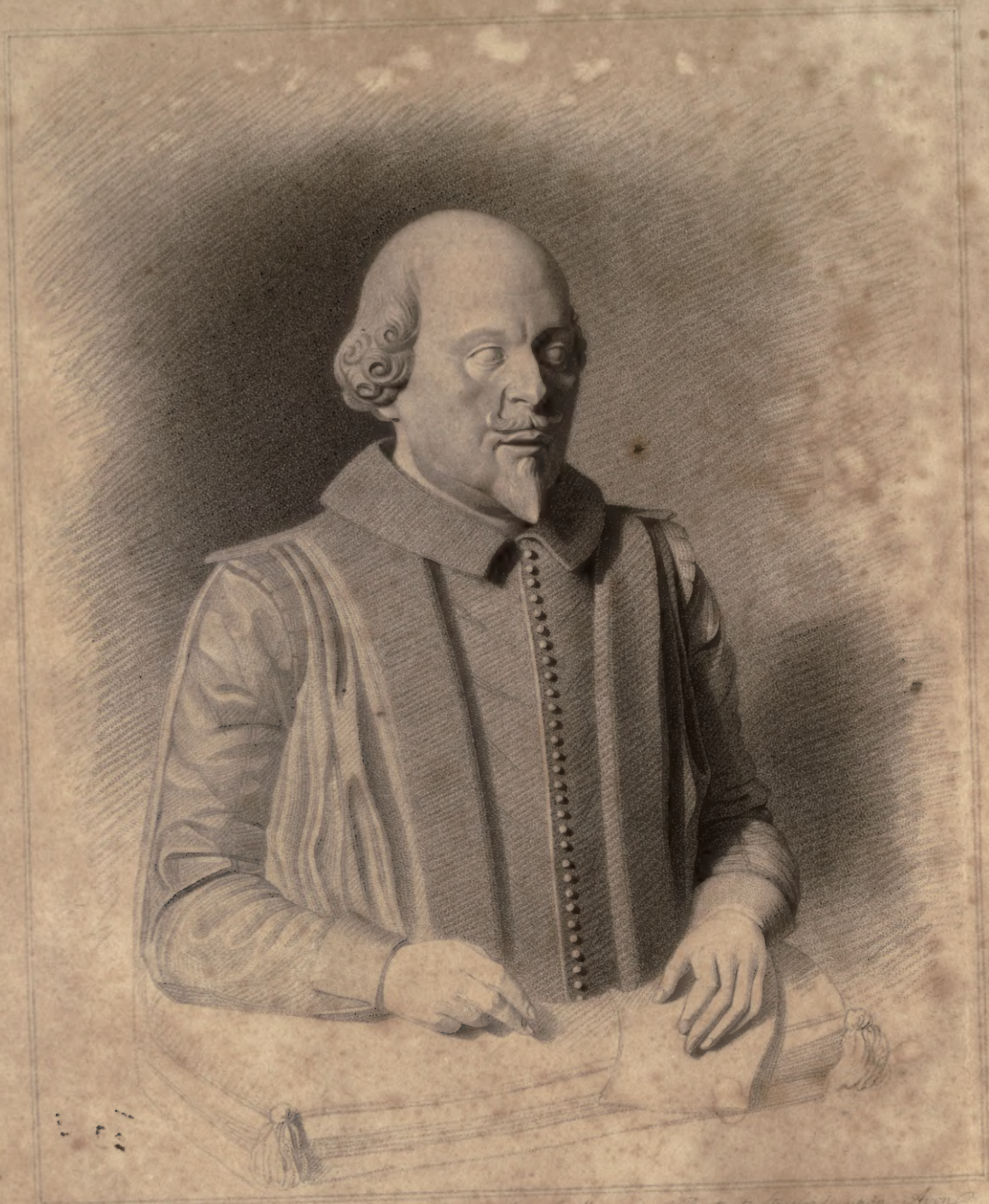












Engraved by W. D. Fry, from a Cast made by W. George Bullocke from the Monumental Effigy at Stratford-upon-Avon.

SHAKSPEARE.



# SHAKSPEARE

AND

## HIS TIMES:

INCLUDING

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET:

CRITICISMS ON HIS GENIUS AND WRITINGS; A NEW CHRONOLOGY OF HIS PLAYS;  
A DISQUISITION ON THE OBJECT OF HIS SONNETS;

AND

A HISTORY OF

THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND AMUSEMENTS, SUPERSTITIONS,  
POETRY, AND ELEGANT LITERATURE OF HIS AGE.

BY NATHAN DRAKE, M.D.

AUTHOR OF "LITERARY HOURS," AND OF "ESSAYS ON PERIODICAL LITERATURE."

Triumph my Britain! thou hast one to show,  
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe. —

————— Soul of the age,  
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage,  
My Shakspeare, rise ! Be

BEN JONSON.

The very age and body of the time, his form and pressure.  
SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.

1817.

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SHAKSPEARE

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HIS TIMES

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET



NATHAN ORRICK M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed by A. Strahan,  
Printers-Street, London.



## P R E F A C E.

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THOUGH two centuries have now elapsed, since the death of Shakspeare, no attempt has hitherto been made to render him the medium for a comprehensive and connected view of the Times in which he lived.

Yet, if any man be allowed to fill a station thus conspicuous and important, Shakspeare has undoubtedly the best claim to the distinction; not only from his pre-eminence as a dramatic poet, but from the intimate relation which his works bear to the manners, customs, superstitions, and amusements of his age.

Struck with the interest which a work of this kind, if properly executed, might possess, the author was induced, several years ago, to commence the undertaking, with the express intention of blending with the detail of manners, &c. such a portion of criticism, biography, and literary history, as should render the whole still more attractive and complete.

In attempting this, it has been his aim to place Shakspeare in the fore-ground of the picture, and to throw around him, in groups more or less distinct and full,



the various objects of his design ; giving them promi-  
nency and light, according to their greater or smaller  
connection with the principal figure.

More especially has it been his wish, to infuse through-  
out the whole plan, whether considered in respect to its  
entire scope, or to the parts of which it is composed,  
that degree of unity and integrity, of relative proportion  
and just bearing, without which neither harmony, sim-  
plicity, nor effect, can be expected, or produced.

With a view, also, to distinctness and perspicuity of  
elucidation, the whole has been distributed into three  
parts or pictures, entitled, — “ SHAKSPEARE IN STRAT-  
FORD ; ” — “ SHAKSPEARE IN LONDON ; ” — “ SHAKSPEARE  
IN RETIREMENT ; ” — which, though inseparably united,  
as forming but portions of the same story, and harmo-  
nized by the same means, have yet, both in subject  
and execution, a peculiar character to support.

The *first* represents our Poet in the days of his youth,  
on the banks of his native Avon, in the midst of rural  
imagery, occupations, and amusements ; in the *second*,  
we behold him in the capital of his country, in the  
centre of rivalry and competition, in the active pursuit  
of reputation and glory ; and in the *third*, we accom-  
pany the venerated bard to the shades of retirement, to  
the bosom of domestic peace, to the enjoyment of unsul-  
lied fame.

It has, therefore, been the business of the author, in  
accordancy with his plan, to connect these delineations



with their relative accompaniments ; to incorporate, for instance, with the first, what he had to relate of the *country*, as it existed in the age of Shakspeare ; its manners, customs, and characters ; its festivals, diversions, and many of its superstitions ; opening and closing the subject with the biography of the poet, and binding the intermediate parts, not only by a perpetual reference to his drama, but by their own constant and direct tendency towards the developement of the one object in view.

With the *second*, which commences with Shakspeare's introduction to the stage as an actor, is combined the poetic, dramatic, and general literature of the times, together with an account of *metropolitan* manners and diversions, and a full and continued criticism on the poems and plays of our bard.

After a survey, therefore, of the Literary world, under the heads of Bibliography, Philology, Criticism, History, Romantic, and Miscellaneous Literature, follows a View of the Poetry of the same period, succeeded by a critique on the juvenile productions of Shakspeare, and including a biographical sketch of Lord Southampton, and a new hypothesis on the origin and object of the Sonnets.

Of the immediately subsequent description of diversions, &c. the Economy of the Stage forms a leading feature, as preparatory to a History of Dramatic Poetry, previous to the year 1590 ; and this is again introductory to a discussion concerning the Period when Shakspeare



commenced a writer for the theatre ; to a new chronology of his plays, and to a criticism on each drama ; a department which is interspersed with dissertations on the *fairy-mythology*, the *apparitions*, the *witchcraft*, and the *magic* of Shakspeare ; portions of popular credulity which had been, in reference to this distribution, omitted in detailing the superstitions of the country.

This second part is then terminated by a summary of Shakspeare's dramatic character, by a brief view of dramatic poetry during his connection with the stage, and by the biography of the poet to the close of his residence in London.

The *third* and last of these delineations is, unfortunately, but too short, being altogether occupied with the few circumstances which distinguish the last three years of the life of our bard, with a review of his disposition and moral character, and with some notice of the first tributes paid to his memory.

It will readily be admitted, that the materials for the greater part of this arduous task are abundant ; but it must also be granted, that they are dispersed through a vast variety of distant and unconnected departments of literature ; and that to draw forth, arrange, and give a luminous disposition to, these masses of scattered intelligence, is an achievement of no slight magnitude, especially when it is considered, that no step in the progress of such an undertaking can be made, independent of a constant recurrence to authorities.



How far the author is qualified for the due execution of his design, remains for the public to decide ; but it may, without ostentation, be told, that his leisure, for the last thirty years, has been, in a great degree, devoted to a line of study immediately associated with the subject ; and that his attachment to old English literature has led him to a familiarity with the only sources from which, on such a topic, authentic illustration is to be derived.

He will likewise venture to observe, that, in the style of criticism which he has pursued, it has been his object, an ambitious one it is true, to unfold, in a manner more distinct than has hitherto been effected, the peculiar character of the poet's drama ; and, lastly, to produce a work, which, while it may satisfy the poetical antiquary, shall, from the variety, interest, and integrity of its component parts, be equally gratifying to the general reader.

*Hadleigh, Suffolk,  
April 7th, 1817.*







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Five genuine Autographs of Shakespeare.

N<sup>o</sup> 1.

W<sup>m</sup> Shakspeare

2

William  
Shakspeare

3

William  
Shakspeare

4

W<sup>m</sup> Shakspeare

5

W<sup>m</sup> Shakspeare

N<sup>o</sup> 1. is from Shakespeare's Mortgage 1612-13.

2. is from Mr. Malone's plate II. N<sup>o</sup> X.

3. is from the first brief of Shakespeare's Will.

4. is from the second brief of the Will.

5. is from the third brief of the Will.



# SHAKSPEARE AND HIS TIMES.

---

## PART I.

### *SHAKSPEARE IN STRATFORD.*

---

#### CHAPTER I.

BIRTH OF SHAKSPEARE — HIS FAMILY — THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF HIS NAME.

**W**ILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, the object almost of our idolatry as a dramatic poet, was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, on the 23d of April, 1564, and he was baptized on the 26th of the same month.

Of his family, not much that is certain can be recorded; but it would appear, from an instrument in the College of Heralds, confirming the grant of a coat of arms to John Shakspeare in 1599, that his great grandfather had been rewarded by Henry the Seventh, “for his faithfull and approved service, with lands and tenements given to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where,” proceeds this document, “they have continued by some descents in good reputation and credit.” Notwithstanding this assertion, however, no such grant, after a minute examination, made by Mr. Malone in the chapel of the Rolls, has been discovered; whence we have reason to infer, that the heralds have been mistaken in their statement, and that the bounty of the monarch was directed through a different channel. From the language, indeed, of two rough draughts of a prior grant of



arms to John Shakspeare in 1596, it is probable that the service alluded to was of a military cast, for it is there expressly said, that he was rewarded "for his faithful and *valiant* service," a term, perhaps, implying the heroism of our poet's ancestor in the field of Bosworth.

That the property, thus bestowed upon the family of Shakspeare, descended to John, the father of the poet, and contributed to his influence and respectability, there is no reason to doubt. From the register, indeed, and public writings relating to Stratford, Mr. Rowe has justly inferred, that the Shakspeares were of good figure and fashion there, and were considered as gentlemen. We may presume, however, that the patrimony of Mr. John Shakspeare, the parent of our great dramatist, was not very considerable, as he found the profits of business necessary to his support. He was, in fact, a wool-stapler, and, there is reason to suppose, in a large way; for he was early chosen a member of the corporation of his town, a situation usually connected with respectable circumstances, and soon after, he filled the office of high bailiff, or chief magistrate of that body. The record of these promotions has been thus given from the books of the corporation.

"Jan. 10, in the 6th year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, John Shakspeare passed his Chamberlain's accounts."

"At the Hall holden the eleventh day of September, in the eleventh year of the reign of our sovereign lady Elizabeth, 1569, were present Mr. John Shakspeare, High Bailiff."\*

It was during the period of his filling this important office, that he first obtained a grant of arms; and, in a note annexed to the subsequent patent of 1596, now in the College of Arms†, it is stated that he was likewise a justice of the peace, and possessed of lands and tenements to the amount of 500*l*. The final confirmation of this grant took place in 1599, in which his shield and coat are described to be, *In a field of gould upon a bend sable, a speare of the first, the*

\* Communicated to Mr. Malone by the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon.

† Vincent, vol. clvii. p. 24.



*poynt upward, hedded argent ; and for his crest or cognisance, A falcon with his wyngs displayed, standing on a wrethe of his coullers, supporting a speare armed hedded, or steeled sylver.\**

Mr. John Shakspeare married, though in what year is not accurately known, the daughter and heir of Robert Arden, of Wellincote, in the county of Warwick, who is termed, in the Grant of Arms of 1596, "a gentleman of worship." The Arden, or Ardern family, appears to have been of considerable antiquity ; for, in Fuller's Worthies, Rob. Arden de Bromwich, ar. is among the names of the gentry of this county returned by the commissioners in the twelfth year of King Henry the Sixth, 1433 ; and in the eleventh and sixteenth years of Elizabeth, A. D. 1562 and 1568, Sim. Ardern, ar. and Edw. Ardrn, ar. are enumerated, by the same author, among the sheriffs of Warwickshire.† It is well known that the woodland part of this county was formerly denominated Ardern, though, for the sake of euphony, frequently softened towards the close of the sixteenth century, into the smoother appellation of Arden ; hence it is not improbable, that the supposition of Mr. Jacob, who reprinted, in 1770, the Tragedy of Arden of Feversham, a play which was originally published in 1592, may be correct ; namely that Shakspeare, the poet, was *descended by the female line* from the unfortunate individual whose tragical death is the subject of this drama ; for though the name of this gentleman was originally Ardern, he seems early to have experienced the fate of the county district, and to have had his surname harmonized by a similar omission. In consequence of this marriage, Mr. John Shakspeare and his posterity were allowed, by the College of Heralds, to impale their arms with the ancient arms of the Ardrns of Wellincote.‡

Of the issue of John Shakspeare by this connection, the accounts are contradictory and perplexed ; nor is it absolutely ascertained,

\* See the instrument, at full length, Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 146, edit. of 1803.

† The History of the Worthies of England, part iii. fol. 131, 132.

‡ See Shakspeare's coat of arms, Reed's Shaksp. vol. i. p. 146.



whether he had only one wife, or whether he might not have had two, or even three. Mr. Rowe, whose narrative has been usually followed, has given him *ten* children, among whom he considers *William* the poet, as the *eldest* son.\* The Register, however, of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon, which commences in 1558, is incompatible with this statement; for, we there find *eleven* children ascribed to John Shakspeare, *ten* baptized, and *one*, the baptism of which had taken place before the commencement of the Register, buried.† The dates of these baptisms, and of two or three other events, recorded in this Register, it will be necessary, for the sake of elucidation, to transcribe:

"*Jone*, daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 15, 1558.

"*Margaret*, daughter of John Shakspeare, was buried April 30, 1563.

"*WILLIAM*, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 26, 1564.

"*Gilbert*, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized Oct. 3, 1566.

"*Jone*‡, daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized April 15, 1569.

"*Anne*, daughter of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 28, 1571.

"*Richard*, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized March 11, 1573-4.

"*Edmund*, son of Mr. John Shakspeare, was baptized May 3, 1580.

"*John Shakspeare* and Margery Roberts were married Nov. 25, 1584.

"*Margery*, wife of John Shakspeare, was buried Oct. 29, 1587.

"*Ursula*, daughter of John Shakspeare, was baptized March 11, 1588.

"*Humphrey*, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized May 24, 1590.

"*Philip*, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized Sept. 21, 1591.

"*Mr. John Shakspeare* was buried Sept. 8, 1601.

"*Mary Shakspeare*, widow, was buried Sept. 9, 1608."

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 58, 59.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 133.

‡ "It was common in the age of Queen Elizabeth to give the same Christian name to two children successively. This was undoubtedly done in the present instance. The former *Jone* having probably died, (though I can find no entry of her burial in the Register, nor indeed of many of the other children of John Shakspeare) the name of *Jone*, a very favourite one in those days, was transferred to another new-born child."—Malone from Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 134.



Now it is evident, that if the ten children which were baptized, according to this Register, between the years 1558 and 1591, are to be ascribed to the father of our poet, he must necessarily have had *eleven*, in consequence of the record of the decease of his daughter Margaret. He must also have had three wives, for we find his second wife, Margery, died in 1587, and the death of a third, Mary, a widow, is noticed in 1608.

It was suggested to Mr. Malone\*, that very probably, Mr. John Shakspeare had a son born to him, as well as a daughter, before the commencement of the Register, and that this his eldest son, was, as is customary, named after his father, John; a supposition which, (as no other child was baptized by the Christian name of the old gentleman,) carries some credibility with it, and was subsequently acquiesced in by Mr. Malone himself.

In this case, therefore, the marriage recorded in the Register, is that of John Shakspeare the *younger* with Margery Roberts, and the three children born between 1588 and 1591, Ursula, Humphrey, and Philip, the issue of this John, not by the first, but by a second marriage; for as Margery Shakspeare died in 1587, and Ursula was baptized in 1588-9, these children must have been by the Mary Shakspeare, whose death is mentioned as occurring in 1608, and as she is there denominated a *widow*, the younger John must consequently have died before that date.

The result of *this* arrangement will be, that the father of our poet had only *nine* children, and that WILLIAM was not the eldest, but the *second* son.

On either plan, however, the account of Mr. Rowe is equally inaccurate; and as the introduction of an elder son involves a variety of suppositions, and at the same time nothing improbable is attached to the consideration of this part of the Register in the light in which it usually appears, that is, as allusive solely to the father, it will, we think, be the better and the safer mode, to rely upon it, according

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 136.



to its more direct and literal import. This determination will be greatly strengthened by reflecting, that old Mr. Shakspeare was, on the authority of the last instrument granting him a coat of arms, living in 1599; that on the testimony of the Register, taken in the common acceptation, he was not buried until September 1601; and that in no part of the same document is the epithet *younger* annexed to the name of John Shakspeare, a mark of distinction which there is every reason to suppose would have been introduced, had the father and a son of the same Christian name been not only living at the same time in the same town, but the latter likewise a parent.

That the circumstances of Mr. John Shakspeare were, at the period of his marriage, and for several years afterwards, if not affluent, yet easy and respectable, there is every reason to suppose, from his having filled offices of the first trust and importance in his native town; but, from the same authority which has induced us to draw this inference, another of a very different kind, with regard to a subsequent portion of his life, may with equal confidence be taken. In the books of the corporation of Stratford it is stated, that —

“ At the hall holden Nov. 19th, in the 21st year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, it is ordained, that every Alderman shall be taxed to pay weekly 4*d.*, saving *John Shakspeare* and Robert Bruce, who shall not be taxed to pay any thing; and every burgess to pay 2*d.*” Again,

“ At the hall holden on the 6th day of September, in the 28th year of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth:

“ At this hall William Smith and Richard Courte are chosen to be Aldermen in the places of John Wheler and John Shakspeare, for that Mr. Wheler doth desire to be put out of the company, and Mr. Shakspeare doth not come to the halls, when they be warned, nor hath not done of long time.”\*

The conclusion to be drawn from these memoranda must unavoidably be, that, in 1579, ten years after he had served the office

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 58.



of High Bailiff, his situation, in a pecuniary light, was so much reduced, that, on this account, he was excused the weekly payment of 4*d.*; and that, in 1586, the same distress still subsisting, and perhaps in an aggravated degree, he was, on the plea of non-attendance, dismissed the corporation.

The causes of this unhappy change in his circumstances cannot now, with the exception of the burthen of a large and increasing family, be ascertained; but it is probable, that to this period is to be referred, if there be any truth in the tradition, the report of Aubrey, that "William Shakspeare's father was a butcher." This anecdote, he affirms, was received from the neighbours of the bard, and, on this account, merits some consideration. \*

We are indebted to Mr. Rowe for the first intimation concerning the trade of John Shakspeare; his declaration, derived also from tradition, that he was a "considerable dealer in wool," appears confirmed by subsequent research. From a window in a room of the premises which originally formed part of the house at Stratford, in which Shakspeare the poet was born, and a part of which premises has for many years been occupied as a public-house, with the sign of the Swan and Maidenhead, a pane of glass was taken, about five and forty years ago, by Mr. Peyton, the then master of the adjoining Inn called The White Lion. This pane, now in the possession of his son, is nearly six inches in diameter, and perfect, and on it are painted the arms of the merchants of the wool-staple — *Nebule on a chief gules, a lion passant or.* It appears, from the style in which it is finished, to have been executed about the time of Shakspeare, the father, and is undoubtedly a strong corroborative proof of the authenticity of Mr. Rowe's relation. †

\* MS. Aubrey, Mus. Ashmol. Oxon. Lives, p. 1. fol. 78, a. (Inter Cod. Dugdal.) Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 213.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 214. and Ireland's Picturesque Views on the Upper or Warwickshire Avon, p. 190, 191. Since this passage was written, however, the proof which it was supposed to contain, has been completely annihilated. "If John Shakspeare's occupation in life," observes Mr. Wheeler, "want confirmation, this circumstance



These traditional anecdotes, though apparently contradictory, may easily admit of reconciliation, if we consider, that between the employment of a wool-dealer, and a butcher, there is no small affinity; "few occupations," observes Mr. Malone, "can be named which are more naturally connected with each other." \* It is highly probable, therefore, that during the period of John Shakspeare's distress, which we know to have existed in 1579, when our poet was but fifteen years of age, he might have had recourse to this more humble trade, as in many circumstances connected with his customary business, and as a great additional means of supporting a very numerous family.

That the necessity for this union, however, did not exist towards the latter part of his life, there is much reason to imagine, both from the increasing reputation and affluence of his son William, and from the fact of his applying to the College of Heralds, in 1596 and 1599, for a grant of arms; events, of which the first, considering the character of the poet, must almost necessarily have led to, and the second directly pre-supposes, the possession of comparative competence and respectability.

The only remaining circumstance which time has spared us, relative to the personal conduct of John Shakspeare, is, that there appears some foundation to believe that, a short time previous to his death, he made a confession of his faith, or spiritual will; a document still in existence, the discovery and history of which, together with the declaration itself, will not improperly find a place at the close of this commencing chapter of our work.

About the year 1770, a master-bricklayer, of the name of Mosely, being employed by Mr. Thomas Hart, the fifth in descent, in a

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will unfortunately not answer such a purpose; for old Thomas Hart constantly declared that his great uncle, Shakspeare Hart, a glazier of this town, who had the new glazing of the chapel windows, where it is known, from Dugdale, that such a shield existed, brought it from thence, and introduced it into his own window." — *Wheeler's Guide to Stratford*, pp. 13, 14.

\* Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. iii. p. 214.



direct line, from the poet's sister, Joan Hart, to new-tile the house in which he then lived, and which is supposed to be that under whose roof the bard was born, found hidden between the rafters and the tiling of the house, a manuscript, consisting of six leaves, stitched together, in the form of a small book. This manuscript Mosely, who bore the character of an honest and industrious man, gave (without asking or receiving any recompense) to Mr. Peyton, an alderman of Stratford; and this gentleman very kindly sent it to Mr. Malone, through the medium of the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Stratford. It had, however, previous to this transmission, unfortunately been deprived of the first leaf, a deficiency which was afterwards supplied by the discovery, that Mosely, who had now been dead about two years, had copied a great portion of it, and from his transcription the introductory parts were supplied. \* The daughter of Mosely and Mr. Hart, who were both living in the year 1790, agreed in a perfect recollection of the circumstances attending the discovery of this curious document, which consists of the following fourteen articles.

## 1.

“ In the name of God, the Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost, the most holy and blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the holy host of archangels, angels, patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, apostles, saints, martyrs, and all the celestial court and company of heaven: I John Shakspear, an unworthy member of the holy Catholic religion, being at this my present writing in perfect health of body, and sound mind, memory, and understanding, but calling to mind the uncertainty of life and certainty of death, and that I may be possibly cut off in the blossome of my sins, and called to render an account of all my transgressions externally and internally, and that I may be unprepared for the dreadful trial either by sacrament, pennance, fasting, or prayer, or any other purgation whatever, do in the holy presence above specified, of my own free and voluntary accord, make

\* Reed's Shakespeare, vol. iii. p. 197, 198.



and ordaine this my last spiritual will, testament, confession, protestation, and confession of faith, hoping hereby to receive pardon for all my sinnes and offences, and thereby to be made partaker of life everlasting, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my saviour and redeemer, who took upon himself the likeness of man, suffered death, and was crucified upon the crosse, for the redemption of sinners.

## 2.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear doe by this present protest, acknowledge, and confess, that in my past life I have been a most abominable and grievous sinner, and therefore unworthy to be forgiven without a true and sincere repentance for the same. But trusting in the manifold mercies of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer, I am encouraged by relying on his sacred word, to hope for salvation, and be made partaker of his heavenly kingdom, as a member of the celestial company of angels, saints, and martyrs, there to reside for ever and ever in the court of my God.

## 3.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear doe by this present protest and declare, that as I am certain I must passe out of this transitory life into another that will last to eternity, I do hereby most humbly implore and intreat my good and guardian angell to instruct me in this my solemn preparation, protestation, and confession of faith, at least spiritually, in will adoring and most humbly beseeching my Saviour, that he will be pleased to assist me in so dangerous a voyage, to defend me from the snares and deceites of my infernal enemies, and to conduct me to the secure haven of his eternal blisse.

## 4.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear doe protest that I will also passe out of this life, armed with the last sacrament of extreme unction: the which if through any let or hindrance I should not then be able to have, I doe now also for that time demand and crave the same; be-



seeching his Divine Majesty that he will be pleased to annoynt my senses both internall and externall with the sacred oyle of his infinite mercy, and to pardon me all my sins committed by seeing, speaking, feeling, smelling, hearing, touching, or by any other way whatsoever.

## 5.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear doe by this present protest, that I will never through any temptation whatsoever despaire of the divine goodness, for the multitude and greatness of my sinnes; for which, although I confesse that I have deserved hell, yet will I steadfastly hope in God’s infinite mercy, knowing that he hath heretofore pardoned many as great sinners as myself, whereof I have good warrant sealed with his sacred mouth, in holy writ, whereby he pronounceth that he is not come to call the just, but sinners.

## 6.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear do protest, that I do not know that I have ever done any good worke meritorious of life everlasting: and if I have done any, I do acknowledge that I have done it with a great deale of negligence and imperfection; neither should I have been able to have done the least without the assistance of his divine grace. Wherefore let the devill remain confounded: for I doe in no wise presume to merit heaven by such good workes alone, but through the merits and blood of my Lord and Saviour Jesus, shed upon the cross for me most miserable sinner.

## 7.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear do protest by this present writing, that I will patiently endure and suffer all kind of infirmity, sickness, yea, and the paine of death itself: wherein if it should happen, which God forbid, that through violence of paine and agony, or by subtilty of the devill, I should fall into any impatience or temptation of blasphemy, or murmuration against God, or the Catholic faith, or give



any signe of bad example, I do henceforth, and for that present, repent me, and am most heartily sorry for the same: and I do renounce all the evill whatsoever, which I might have then done or said; beseeching his divine clemency that he will not forsake me in that grievous and painefull agony.

## 8.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear, by virtue of this present testament, I do pardon all the injuries and offences that any one hath ever done unto me, either in my reputation, life, goods, or any other way whatsoever; beseeching sweet Jesus to pardon them for the same; and I do desire that they will doe the like by me whome I have offended or injured in any sort howsoever.

## 9.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear do here protest, that I do render infinite thanks to his Divine Majesty for all the benefits that I have received, as well secret as manifest, and in particular for the benefit of my creation, redemption, sanctification, conservation, and vocation to the holy knowledge of him and his true Catholic faith: but above all for his so great expectation of me to pennance, when he might most justly have taken me out of this life, when I least thought of it, yea, even then, when I was plunged in the durty puddle of my sinnes. Blessed be therefore and praised, for ever and ever, his infinite patience and charity.

## 10.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear do protest, that I am willing, yea, I do infinitely desire and humbly crave, that of this my last will and testament the glorious and ever Virgin Mary, mother of God, refuge and advocate of sinners, (whom I honour specially above all saints,) may be the chiefe executresse, togeather with these other saints, my patrons, (Saint Winefride,) all whome I invoke and beseech to be present at the hour of my death, that she and they comfort me with



their desired presence, and crave of sweet Jesus that he will receive my soul into peace.

## 11.

“ *Item*, In virtue of this present writing, I John Shakspear do likewise most willingly and with all humility constitute and ordaine my good angell for defender and protector of my soul in the dreadfull day of judgment, when the finall sentence of eternall life or death shall be discussed and given : beseeching him that, as my soule was appointed to his custody and protection when I lived, even so he will vouchsafe to defend the same at that houre, and conduct it to eternall bliss.

## 12.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear do in like manner pray and beseech all my dear friends, parents, and kinsfolks, by the bowells of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that since it is uncertain what lot will befall me, for fear notwithstanding least by reason of my sinnes I be to pass and stay a long while in purgatory, they will vouchsafe to assist and succour me with their holy prayers and satisfactory workes, especially with the holy sacrifice of the masse, as being the most effectual means to deliver soules from their torments and paines ; from the which, if I shall by God’s gracious goodnesse, and by their vertuous workes, be delivered, I do promise that I will not be ungratefull unto them for so great a benefitt.

## 13.

“ *Item*, I John Shakspear doe by this my last will and testament bequeath my soul, as soon as it shall be delivered and loosened from the prison of this my body, to be entombed in the sweet and amorous coffin of the side of Jesus Christ ; and that in this life-giving sepulcher it may rest and live, perpetually enclosed in that eternall habitation of repose, there to blesse for ever and ever that direful iron of the launce, which, like a charge in a censore, formes so sweet



and pleasant a monument within the sacred breast of my Lord and Saviour.

## 14.

“ *Item*, Lastly I John Shakspear doe protest, that I will willingly accept of death in what manner soever it may befall me, conforming my will unto the will of God ; accepting of the same in satisfaction for my sinnes, and giving thanks unto his Divine Majesty for the life he hath bestowed upon me. And if it please him to prolong or shorten the same, blessed be he also a thousand thousand times ; into whose most holy hands I commend my soul and body, my life and death : and I beseech him above all things, that he never permit any change to be made by me John Shakspear of this my aforesaid will and testament. Amen.

“ I John Shakspeare have made this present writing of protestation, confession, and charter, in presence of the blessed Virgin Mary, my angell guardian, and all the celestial court, as witnesses hereunto : the which my meaning is, that it be of full value now presently and for ever, with the force and vertue of testament, codicill, and donation in course of death ; confirming it anew, being in perfect health of soul and body, and signed with mine own hand ; carrying also the same about me, and for the better declaration hereof, my will and intention is that it be finally buried with me after my death.

“ Pater noster, Ave maria, Credo.

“ Jesu, son of David, have mercy on me. — Amen.” \*

If the intention of the testator, as expressed in the close of this will, were carried into effect, then, of course, the manuscript which Mosely found, must necessarily have been a copy of that which was buried in the grave of John Shakspeare.

Mr. Malone, to whom, in his edition of Shakspeare, printed in 1790, we are indebted for this singular paper, and for the history

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 199. et seq.



attached to it, observes, that he is unable to ascertain, whether it was drawn up by John Shakspeare the father, or by John his *supposed* eldest son; but he says, "I have taken some pains to ascertain the authenticity of this manuscript, and, after a very careful inquiry, am perfectly satisfied that it is genuine." \* In the "Inquiry," however, which he published in 1796, relative to the Ireland papers, he has given us, though without assigning any reasons for his change of opinion, a very different result: "In my conjecture," he remarks, "concerning the writer of that paper, I certainly was mistaken; for I have since obtained documents that clearly prove it could not have been the composition of any one of our poet's family." †

In the "Apology" of Mr. George Chalmers "for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers," which appeared in the year subsequent to Mr. Malone's "Inquiry," a new light is thrown upon the origin of this confession. "From the sentiment, and the language, this confession appears to be," says this gentleman, "the effusion of a Roman Catholic mind, and was probably drawn up by some Roman Catholic priest. ‡ If these premises be granted, it will follow, as a fair deduction, that the family of Shakspeare were Roman Catholics; a circumstance this, which is wholly consistent with what Mr. Malone is now studious to inculcate, viz. "that this confession could not have been the composition of any of our poet's family." The thoughts, the language, the orthography, all demonstrate the truth of my conjecture, though Mr. Malone did not perceive this truth, when he first published this paper in 1790. But, it was the performance of a *clerke*, the undoubted work of the family-priest. The conjecture, that Shakspeare's family were Roman Catholics, is strengthened by the fact, that his father declined to attend the

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 197.

† Malone's Inquiry, p. 198, 199.

‡ As a specimen, let us take the beginning of this declaration of faith, and see still stronger terms in the conclusion of this protestation, *confession*, and charter.



corporation meetings, and was at last removed from the corporate body." \*

This conjecture of Mr. Chalmers appears to us in its leading points very plausible; for that the father of our poet might be a Roman Catholic is, if we consider the very unsettled state of his times with regard to religion, not only a possible but a probable supposition: in which case, it would undoubtedly have been the office of the spiritual director of the family to have drawn up such a paper as that which we have been perusing. It was the fashion also of the period, as Mr. Chalmers has subsequently observed, to draw up confessions of religious faith, a fashion honoured in the observance by the great names of Lord Bacon, Lord Burghley, and Archbishop Parker †. That he declined, however, attending the corporation-meetings of Stratford from religious motives, and that his removal from that body was the result of non-attendance from *such a cause*, cannot readily be admitted; for we have clearly seen that his defection was owing to pecuniary difficulties; nor is it, in the least degree, probable that, after having honourably filled the highest offices in the corporation without scruple, he should at length, and in a reign too popularly protestant, incur expulsion from an avowed motive of this kind; especially as we have reason to suppose, from the mode in which this profession was concealed, that the tenets of the person whose faith it declares, were cherished in secret.

From an accurate inspection of the hand-writing of this will, Mr. Malone infers that it cannot be attributed to an earlier period than the year 1600 ‡, whence it follows that, if dictated by, or drawn up at the desire of, John Shakspeare, his death soon sealed the confession of his faith; for, according to the register, he was buried on September 8th, 1601.

\* "The place too, the roof of the house where this confession was found, proves, that it had been therein concealed, during times of persecution, for the holy Catholick religion." Apology, p. 198, 199.

† Chalmers's Apology, p. 200.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. p. iii. 198.



Such are the very few circumstances which reiterated research has hitherto gleaned relative to the father of our poet; circumstances which, as being intimately connected with the history and character of his son, have acquired an interest of no common nature. Scanty as they must be pronounced, they lead to the conclusion that he was a moral and industrious man; that when fortune favoured him, he was not indolent, but performed the duties of a magistrate with respectability and effect, and that in the hour of adversity he exerted every nerve to support with decency a numerous family.

Before we close this chapter, it may be necessary to state, that the very orthography of the name of Shakspeare has occasioned much dispute. Of Shakspeare the father, no autograph exists; but the poet has left us several, and from these, and from the monumental inscriptions of his family, must the question be decided; the latter, as being of the least authority, we shall briefly mention, as exhibiting, in Dugdale, three varieties,—*Shakespeare*; *Shakespere*, and *Shakspeare*. The former present us with *five* specimens which, singular as it may appear, all vary, either in the mode of writing, or mode of spelling. The first is annexed to a mortgage executed by the poet in 1613, and appears thus, *W<sup>m</sup> Shakspe<sup>a</sup>*: the second is from a deed of bargain and sale, relative to the same transaction, and of the same period, and signed, *William Shaksper*: the third, fourth, and fifth are taken from the *Will* of Shakspeare executed in March 1616, consisting of three *briefs* or sheets, to each of which his name is subscribed. These signatures, it is remarkable, differ considerably, especially in the surnames; for in the first brief we find *William Shackspere*; in the second, *Willm Shakspe re*, and in the third, *William Shakspeare*. It has been supposed, however, that, according to the practice in Shakspeare's time, the name in the first sheet was written by the scrivener who drew the will.

In the year 1790, Mr. Malone, from an inspection of the mortgage, pronounced the genuine orthography to be *Shakspeare*\*; in 1796,

\* Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. i. 149.



from consulting the deed of sale, he altered his opinion, and declared that the poet's own mode of spelling his name was, beyond a possibility of doubt, that of *Shakspere*, though for reasons which he should assign in a subsequent publication, he should still continue to write the name *Shakspeare*. \*

To this decision, relative to the genuine orthography, Mr. Chalmers cannot accede; and for this reason, that, "when the testator subscribed his name, for the *last time*, he *plainly* wrote Shakspeare." †

It is obvious, therefore, that the controversy turns upon, whether there be, or be not, an *a* introduced in the second syllable of the last signature of the poet. Mr. Malone, on the suggestion of an anonymous correspondent, thinks that there is not, this gentleman having clearly shown him, "that though there was a superfluous stroke when the poet came to write the letter *r* in his last signature, probably from the tremor of his hand, there was no *a* discoverable in that syllable; and that this name, like both the other, was written *Shakspere*." ‡

From the annexed plate of autographs, which is copied from Mr. Chalmers's Apology, and presents us with very perfect fac-similes of the signatures, it is at once evident, that the assertion of the anonymous correspondent, that the last signature, "*like both the other*, was written Shakspere," cannot be correct; for the surname in the first brief is written Shackspere, and, in the second, Shakspe re. Now the *hiatus* in this second signature is unaccounted for in the fac-simile given by Mr. Malone§; but in the plate of Mr. Chalmers it is found to have been occasioned by the intrusion of the word *the* of the *preceding line*, a circumstance which, very probably, might prevent the introduction of the controverted letter. It is likewise, we think, very evident that something more than a *superfluous stroke* exists between the *e* and *r* of the last signature, and that the variation

\* Malone's Inquiry, p. 120.

† Chalmers's Apology, p. 235.

‡ Malone's Inquiry, p. 117, 118.

§ Inquiry, Plate II. No. 12.



is, indeed, too material to have originated from any supposed tremor of the hand.

Upon the whole, it may, we imagine, be safely reposed on as a fact, that Shakspeare was not uniform in the orthography of his own name; that he sometimes spelt it *Shakspere* and sometimes *Shakspeare*; but that no other variation is extant which can claim a similar authority.\* It is, therefore, nearly a matter of indifference which of *these two* modes

\* A want of uniformity in the spelling of names, was a species of negligence very common in the time of Shakspeare, and may be observed, remarks Mr. Chalmers, "with regard to the principal poets of that age; as we may see in *England's Parnassus*, a collection of poetry which was published in 1600: thus,

Sydney	Sidney.		
Spenser	Spencer.		
Jonson	Johnson	Jhonson.	
Dekker	Dekkar.		
Markeham	Markham.		
Sylvister	Sylvester	Silvester.	
Sackwill	Sackuil.		
Fitz Geffrey	Fitzjeffry	Fitz Jeffray.	
France	Fraunce.		
Midleton	Middleton.		
Gulpin	Gilpin.		
Achelly	Achely	Achilly	Achillye.
Drayton	Draïton.		
Daniel	Daniel.		
Davis	Davies.		
Marlow	Marlowe.		
Marston	Murston.		
Fairefax	Fairfax.		
Kid	Kyd.		

Yet, it is remarkable, that in this collection of diversities, our dramatist's name is uniformly spelt Shakespeare: in whatever manner this celebrated name may have been pronounced in Warwickshire, it certainly was spoken in London, with the *e* soft, thus, Shakespeare: in the registers of the Stationers' Company, it is written, *Shakespere*, and *Shakespeare*." Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, p. 129, 130.

A curious proof of the uncertain orthography of the poet's surname among his contemporaries and immediate successors, may be drawn from a pamphlet, entitled, "The great Assizes holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessours: at which Sessions are arraigned, Mercurius Britannicus, &c. &c. London: Printed by Richard Cotes for Edward Husbands, and are to be sold at his shop in the Middle Temple. 1645. qto. 25 leaves."



of spelling we adopt; yet, as his last signature appears to have included the letter *a*, it may, for the sake of consistency, be proper silently to acquiesce in its admission.

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In this rare tract, among the list of the jurors is found the name of our bard, written William *Shakespeere*; and in the body of the poem, it is given *Shakespeare*, and *Shakespear*. *Vide* British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 513.



## CHAPTER II.

THE HOUSE IN WHICH SHAKSPEARE WAS BORN — PLAGUE AT STRATFORD, JUNE 1564 —  
SHAKSPEARE EDUCATED AT THE FREE-SCHOOL OF STRATFORD — STATE OF EDUCATION,  
AND OF JUVENILE LITERATURE IN THE COUNTRY AT THIS PERIOD — EXTENT OF  
SHAKSPEARE'S ACQUIREMENTS AS A SCHOLAR.

THE experience of the last half century has fully proved, that every thing relative to the history of our immortal dramatist has been received, and received justly too, by the public with an avidity proportional to his increasing fame. What, if recorded of a less celebrated character, might be deemed very uninteresting, immediately acquires, when attached to the mighty name of Shakspeare, an importance nearly unparalleled. No apology, therefore, can be necessary for the introduction of any fact or circumstance, however minute, which is, in the slightest degree, connected with his biography; tradition, indeed, has been so sparing of her communications on this subject, that every addition to her little store has been hitherto welcomed with the most lively sensation of pleasure, nor will the attempt to collect and embody these scattered fragments be unattended with its reward.

The birth-place of our poet, the spot where he drew the first breath of life, where Fancy

— fed the little prattler, and with songs  
Oft sooth'd his wond'ring ears,

has been the object of laudable curiosity to thousands, and happily the very roof that sheltered his infant innocence can still be pointed out. It stands in Henley-street, and, though at present forming two separate tenements, was originally but one house.\* The premises

\* It is with some apprehension of imposition that I quote the following passage from Mr. Samuel Ireland's Picturesque Views on the River Avon. This gentleman, the father of the youth who endeavoured so grossly to deceive the public by the fabrication of a large



are still in possession of the Hart family, *now* the *seventh* descendants, in a direct line, from Jone the sister of the poet. From the plate in Reed's *Shakspeare*, which is a correct representation of the existing state of this humble but interesting dwelling, it will appear, that one portion of it is occupied by the Swan and Maidenhead public-house, and the other by a butcher's shop, in which the son of old Mr. Thomas Hart, mentioned in the last chapter, still carries on his father's trade.\*

"The kitchen of this house," says Mr. Samuel Ireland, "has an appearance sufficiently interesting, abstracted from its claim to notice as relative to the Bard. It is a subject very similar to those that so frequently employed the rare talents of Ostade, and therefore cannot be deemed unworthy the pencil of an inferior artist. In the corner of the chimney stood an old oak-chair, which had for a number of years received nearly as many adorers as the celebrated shrine of the Lady of Loretto. This relic was purchased, in July 1790, by the Princess Czartoryska, who made a journey to this place, in order to

mass of MSS. which he attributed to Shakspeare, was undoubtedly, at the time he wrote this book, the complete dupe of his son; and though, as a man of veracity and integrity, to be depended upon with regard to what originated from himself, it is possible, that the settlement which he quotes may have been derived from the same ample store-house of forgery which produced the folio volume of miscellaneous papers, &c. This settlement, in the possession of Mr. Ireland, is brought forward as a proof that the premises in Henley-street were certainly in the occupation of John Shakspeare, the father of the poet; it is dated August 14th, thirty-third of Elizabeth, 1591, and Mr. Ireland professes to give the substance of it in the subsequent terms:—"That George Badger, senior, of Stratford upon Avon, conveys to John and William Courte, yeomen, and their heirs, in trust, &c. a messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, in Stratford upon Avon, in a certain streete called Henley-streete, between the house of Robert Johnson on the one part, and the house of *John Shakspeare* on the other; and also two selions (*i. e.* ridges, or ground between furrows) of land lying between the land of *Thomas Combe*, Gent. on the one hand, and *Thomas Reynolde*, Gent. on the other.' It is regularly executed, and livery of seisin on the 29th of the same month and year indorsed." P. 195. 196.

\* "In a lower room of this public-house," says Mr. Samuel Ireland, "which is part of the premises wherein Shakspeare was born, is a curious antient ornament over the chimney, relieved in plaister, which, from the date, 1606, that was originally marked on it, was probably put up at the time, and possibly by the poet himself: although a rude attempt at historic representation, I have yet thought it worth copying, as it has, I



obtain intelligence relative to Shakspeare; and being told he had often sat in this chair, she placed herself in it, and expressed an ardent wish to become a purchaser; but being informed that it was not to be sold at any price, she left a handsome gratuity to old Mrs. Hart, and left the place with apparent regret. About four months after, the anxiety of the Princess could no longer be withheld, and her secretary was dispatched express, as the fit agent, to purchase this treasure at any rate: the sum of twenty guineas was the price fixed on, and the secretary and chair, with a proper certificate of its authenticity on stamped paper, set off in a chaise for London."\* The elder Mr. Hart, who died about the year 1794, aged sixty-seven, informed Mr. Samuel Ireland, that he well remembered, when a boy, having dressed himself, with some of his playfellows, as Scaramouches (such was his phrase), in the wearing-apparel of Shakspeare; an anecdote of which, if we consider the lapse of time, it may be allowed us to doubt the credibility, and to conclude that the recollection of Mr. Hart had deceived him.

Little more than two months had passed over the head of the infant Shakspeare, when he became exposed to danger of such an imminent kind, that we have reason to rejoice he was not snatched from

believe, passed unnoticed by the multitude of visitors that have been on this spot, or at least has never been made public: and to me it was enough that it held a conspicuous place in the dwelling-house of one who is himself the ornament and pride of the island he inhabited. In 1759, it was repaired and painted in a variety of colours by the old Mr. Thomas Harte before-mentioned, who assured me the motto then round it had been in the old black letter, and dated 1606. The motto runs thus:

Goliath comes with sword and spear,  
And David with a sling:  
Although Goliath rage and swear,  
Down David doth him bring." Picturesque Views, p. 192, 193.

\* Picturesque Views, p. 189, 190. It is probable that Mr. Ireland, though, it appears, unconnected with the forgeries of his son, might, during his tour, be too eager in crediting the tales which were told him. One Jordan, a native of Alverton near Stratford, was for many years the usual *cicerone* to enquirers after Shakspeare, and was esteemed not very accurate in weighing the authenticity of the anecdotes which he related.



us even while he lay in the cradle. He was born, as we have already recorded, on the 23d of April, 1564; and on the 30th of the June following, the plague broke out at Stratford, the ravages of which dreadful disease were so violent, that between this last date and the close of December, not less than two hundred and thirty-eight persons perished; "of which number," remarks Mr. Malone, "probably two hundred and sixteen died of that malignant distemper; and one only of the whole number resided, not in Stratford, but in the neighbouring town of Welcombe. From the two hundred and thirty-seven inhabitants of Stratford, whose names appear in the Register, twenty-one are to be subducted, who, it may be presumed, would have died in six months, in the ordinary course of nature; for in the five preceding years, reckoning, according to the style of that time, from March 25, 1559, to March 25, 1564, two hundred and twenty-one persons were buried at Stratford, of whom two hundred and ten were townsmen: that is, of these latter, forty-two died each year at an average. Supposing one in thirty-five to have died annually, the total number of the inhabitants of Stratford at that period was one thousand four hundred and seventy; and consequently the plague, in the last six months of the year 1564, carried off more than a seventh part of them. Fortunately for mankind it did not reach the house in which the infant Shakspeare lay; for not one of that name appears in the dead list. May we suppose, that, like Horace, he lay secure and fearless in the midst of contagion and death, protected by the Muses, to whom his future life was to be devoted, and covered over:—

————— *sacrâ*  
*Lauroque, collataque myrto,*  
*Non sine Diis animosus infans."* \*

It is now impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty the mode which was adopted in the education of this aspiring genius; all that time has left us on the subject is, that he was sent, though but

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 84, 85.



for a short period, to the free-school of Stratford, a seminary founded in the reign of Henry the Sixth, by the Rev. — Jolepe, M. A., a native of the town; and which, after sharing, at the general dissolution of chantries, religious houses, &c. the usual fate, was restored and patronised by Edward the Sixth, a short time previous to his death. Here it was, that he acquired the *small Latin and less Greek*, which Jonson has attributed to him, a mode of phraseology from which it must be inferred, that he was at *least acquainted* with *both* languages; and, perhaps, we may add, that he who has obtained some knowledge of Greek, however slight, may, with little hesitation, be supposed to have proceeded considerably beyond the limits of mere elementary instruction in Latin.

At the period when Shakspeare was sent to school, the study of the classical languages had made, since the era of the revival of literature, a very rapid progress. Grammars and Dictionaries, by various authors, had been published\*; but the grammatical institute then in general use, both in town and country, was the Grammar of Henry

\* It is possible also that the following grammars and dictionaries, independent of those mentioned in the text, may have contributed to the school-education of Shakspeare: —

1. Certain brief Rules of the Regiment or Construction of the Eight Partes of Speche, in English and Latin, 1537.
2. A short Introduction of Grammar, generallie to be used: compiled and set forth, for the bringyng up of all those that intend to attaine the knowledge of the Latin tongue, 1557.
3. The Scholemaster; or, Plaine and perfite Way of teaching Children to understand, write, and speak, the Latin Tong. By Roger Ascham. 1571.
4. Abecedarium Anglico-Latinum, pro tyrcunculis, Ricardo Huloets excriptore, 1552.
5. The Short Dictionary, 1558.
6. A little Dictionary; compiled by J. Withals, 1559. Afterwards reprinted in 1568, 1572, 1579, and 1599; and entitled, A Shorte Dictionarie most profitable for young Beginners: and subsequently, A Shorte Dictionarie in Lat. and English.
7. The brefe Dyxeyonary, 1562.
8. Huloets Dictionary; newlye corrected, amended, and enlarged, by John Higgins, 1572.
9. Veron's Dictionary; Latin and English, 1575.
10. An Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionarie; containing foure sundrie Tongues: namelie, English, Latine, Greeke, and Frenche. Newlie enriched with varietie of wordes, phrases, proverbs, and divers lightsome observations of grammar. By John Baret, 1580.
11. Rider's Dictionary, Latine, and English, 1589.



the Eighth, which, by the order of Queen Elizabeth, in her Injunctions of 1559, was admitted, to the exclusion of all others: "Every school-master," says the thirty-ninth Injunction, "shall teach the grammar set forth by King Henrie the Eighth, of noble memorie, and continued in the time of Edward the Sixth, and *none other*;" and in the Booke of certain Cannons, 1571, it is again directed, "that no other grammar shall be taught, but only that which the Queen's Majestie hath commanded to be read in all schooles, through the whole realm."

With the exception of Wolsey's *Rudimenta Grammatices*, printed in 1536, and taught in his school at Ipswich, and a similar work of Collet's, established in his seminary in St. Paul's churchyard, this was the grammar publicly and universally adopted, and without doubt the instructor of Shakspeare in the language of Rome.

Another initiatory work, which we may almost confidently affirm him to have studied under the tuition of the master of the free-school at Stratford, was the production of one Ockland, and entitled EIPH-NAPXIA, *sive* ELIZABETHA. The object of this book, which is written in Latin verse, is to panegyrisse the characters and government of Elizabeth and her ministers, and it was, therefore, enjoined by authority to be read as a classic in every grammar-school, and to be indelibly impressed upon the memory of every young scholar in the kingdom; "a matchless contrivance," remarks Bishop Hurd, "to imprint a sense of loyalty on the minds of the people."\*

To these school-books, to which, being introduced by compulsory edicts, there is no doubt Shakspeare was indebted for some learning and much loyalty, may be added, as another resource to which he was directed by his master, the Dictionary of Syr Thomas Elliot, declaring Latin by English, as greatly improved and enriched by Thomas Cooper in 1552. This lexicon, the most copious and celebrated of its day, was received into almost every school, and underwent numerous editions, namely, in 1559, and in 1565, under the title of *The-saurus Linguae Romanæ et Britannicæ*, and again in 1573, 1578, and

\* Moral and Political Dialogues, vol. ii. p. 28. edit. 1788.



1584. Elizabeth not only recommended the lexicon of Cooper, and professed the highest esteem for him, in consequence of the great utility of his work toward the promotion of classical literature, but she more substantially expressed her opinion of his worth by promoting him to the deanery of Gloucester in 1569, and to the bishoprics of Lincoln and Winchester in 1570 and 1584, at which latter see he died on the 29th of April, 1594.\*

Thus far we may be allowed, on good grounds, to trace the very books which were placed in the hands of Shakspeare, during his short noviciate in classical learning; to proceed farther, would be to indulge in mere conjecture, but we may add, and with every just reason for the inference, that from these productions, and from the few minor classics which he had time to study at this seminary, all that the most precocious genius, at such a period of life, and under so transient a direction of the mind to classic lore, could acquire, was obtained.†

\* That school-masters and lexicographers were not usually so well rewarded, notwithstanding the high value placed on classical literature at this period, may be drawn from the complaint of Ascham: "It is pitie," says he, "that commonlie more care is had, yea, and that amonge verie wise men, to find out rather a cunnyng man for their horse, than a cunnyng man for their children. (They say nay in worde, but they do so in deede. For, to the one they will gladlie give a stipend of 200 crownes by yeare, and loth to offer to the other 200 shillings. God, that sitteth in heaven, laugheth their choice to skorne, and rewardeth their liberalitie as it should; for he suffereth them to have tame, and well ordered horse, but wilde and unfortunate children; and therefore, in the ende, they finde more pleasure in their horse than comforte in their children." — Ascham's Works, Bennet's edition, p. 212.

† It is more than possible that the Eclogues of Mantuanus the Carmelite may have been one of the school-books of Shakspeare. He is familiarly quoted and praised in the following passage from *Love's Labour's Lost*: —

"Hol. *Fauste, precor gelidâ quando pecus omne sub umbrâ Ruminat*, — and so forth. Ah, good old Mantua! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice:

——— *Vinegia, Vinegia,*  
*Chi non te rede, ci non te pregia.*

Old Mantuan! old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not." Act iv. sc. 2. And his Eclogues, be it remembered, were translated and printed, together with the Latin on the opposite page, for the use of schools, before the commencement of our author's education; and from a passage quoted by Mr. Malone, from Nashe's *Apologie of Pierce Penniless*, 1593, appear to have continued in use long after its termination. "With



The universality of classical education about the era of 1575, when, it is probable, Shakspeare had not long entered on the acquisitions of the Latin elements, was such that no person of rank or property could be deemed accomplished who had not been thoroughly imbued with the learning and mythology of Greece and Rome. The knowledge which had been previously confined to the clergy or professed scholars, became now diffused among the nobility and gentry, and even influenced, in a considerable degree, the minds and manners of the softer sex. Elizabeth herself led the way in this career of erudition, and she was soon followed by the ladies of her court, who were taught, as Warton observes, not only to distil strong waters, but to construe Greek.\*

The fashion of the court speedily became, to a certain extent, the fashion of the country, and every individual possessed of a decent competency, was solicitous that his children should acquire the literature in vogue. Had the father of our poet continued in prosperous circumstances, there is every reason to conclude that his son would have had the opportunity of acquiring the customary erudition of the times; but we have already seen, that in 1579 he was so reduced in fortune, as to be excused a weekly payment of 4*d.*, a state of depression which had no doubt existed some time before it attracted the notice of the corporation of Stratford.

One result therefore of these pecuniary difficulties was the removal of young Shakspeare from the free-school, an event which has occasioned, among his biographers and numerous commentators, much controversy and conjecture as to the extent of his classical attainments.

From the short period which tradition allows us to suppose that our poet continued under the instruction of a master, we have a right

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the first and second leafe, he plaies very prettilic, and, in ordinarie terms of extenuating, verditis Pierce Pennillesse for a grammar-school wit; saies, his margine is as deeply learned as, *Fauste, precor gelidâ.*" Mantuanus was translated by George Turberville in 1567, and reprinted in 1594. — *Vide* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 95.

\* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 491.



to conclude that, notwithstanding his genius and industry, he must necessarily have made a very superficial acquaintance with the learned languages. That he was called home to assist his father, we are told by Mr. Rowe; and consequently, as the family was numerous and under the pressure of poverty, it is not likely that he found much time to prosecute what he had commenced at school. The accounts, therefore, which have descended to us, on the authority of Ben Jonson, Drayton, Suckling, &c. that he had not much learning, that he depended almost exclusively on his *native* genius, (*that his Latin was small and his Greek less,*) ought to have been, without scruple, admitted. Fuller, who was a diligent and accurate enquirer, has given us in his *Worthies*, printed in 1662, the most full and express opinion on the subject. "He was an eminent instance," he remarks, "of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur*; one is not *made* but *born* a poet. Indeed his learning was *very little*, so that as *Cornish diamonds* are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so *nature* itself was all the *art* which was used upon him." \*

Notwithstanding this uniform assertion of the contemporaries and immediate successors of Shakspeare, relative to his very imperfect knowledge of the languages of Greece and Rome, many of his modern commentators have strenuously insisted upon his intimacy with both, among whom may be enumerated, as the most zealous and decided on this point, the names of Gildon, Sewell, Pope, Upton, Grey, and Whalley. The dispute, however, has been nearly, if not altogether terminated, by the *Essay* of Dr. Farmer *on the Learning of Shakspeare*, who has, by a mode of research equally ingenious and convincing, clearly proved that all the passages which had been triumphantly brought forward as instances of the classical literature of Shakspeare, were taken from translations, or from original, and once popular, productions in his native tongue. Yet the *conclusion* drawn from this essay, so far as it respects the portion of latinity which our poet had

\* *Worthies*, p. iii. p. 126.



acquired and preserved, as the result of his school-education, appears to us greatly too restricted. "*He remembered,*" says the Doctor, "*perhaps enough of his school-boy learning to put the Hig, hag, hog, into the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans:* and might pick up in the writers of the time, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian: but his studies were most demonstratively confined to nature and his own language.\*

A very late writer, in combating this part of the *conclusion* of Dr. Farmer, has advanced an opinion in several respects so similar to our own, that it will be necessary, in justice to him and previous to any further expansion of the idea which we have embraced, to quote his words. "Notwithstanding," says he, "Dr. Farmer's essay on the deficiency of Shakspeare in learning, I must acknowledge myself to be one who does not conceive that his proofs of that fact sufficiently warrant his conclusions from them: 'that his *studies* were demonstrably confined to nature and his own language' is, as Dr. Farmer concludes, true enough; but when it is added, 'that he only picked up in conversation a familiar phrase or two of French, or remembered enough of his school-boy's learning to put *hig, hag, hog*, in the mouths of others:' he seems to me to go beyond any evidence produced by him of so little knowledge of languages in Shakspeare. He proves indeed sufficiently, that Shakspeare chiefly read English books, by his copying sometimes minutely the very errors made in them, many of which he might have corrected, if he had consulted the original Latin books made use of by those writers: but this does not prove that he was not able to read Latin well enough to examine those originals if he chose; it only proves his indolence and indifference about accuracy in minute articles of no importance to the chief object in view of supplying himself with subjects for dramatic compositions. Do we not every day meet with numberless instances of similar and much greater oversights by persons well skilled in Greek as well as Latin, and professed critics also of the writings and abilities

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 85.



of others? If Shakspeare made an ignorant man pronounce the French word *bras* like the English *brass*, and evidently on purpose, as being a probable mistake by such an unlearned speaker; has not one learned modern in writing Latin made *Paginibus* of *Paginis*, and another mentioned a person as being born in the reign of Charles the First, and yet as dying in 1600, full twenty-five years before the accession of that king? Such mistakes arise not from ignorance, but a heedless inattention, while their thoughts are better occupied with more important subjects; as those of Shakspeare were with forming his plots and his characters, instead of examining critically a great Greek volume to see whether he ought to write *on this side of Tiber* or *on that side of Tiber*; which however very possibly he might not be able to read; but Latin was more universally learnt in that age, and even by women, many of whom could both write and speak it; therefore it is not likely that he should be so very deficient in that language, as some would persuade us, by evidence which does not amount to sufficient proofs of the fact. Nay, even although he had a sufficiency of Latin to understand any Latin book, if he chose to do it, yet how many in modern times, under the same circumstances, are led by mere indolence to prefer translations of them, in case they cannot read Latin with such perfect ease, as never to be at a loss for the meaning of a word, so as to be forced to read some sentences twice over before they can understand them rightly. That Shakspeare was not an eminent Latin scholar may be very true, but that he was so totally ignorant as to know nothing more than *hic, hæc, hoc*, must have better proofs before I can be convinced.” \*

The truth seems to be, that Shakspeare, like most boys who have spent but two or three years at a grammar-school, acquired just as much Latin as would enable him, with the assistance of a lexicon, and no little share of assiduity, to construe a minor classic; a degree of acquisition which we every day see, unless forwarded by much leisure and much private industry, immediately becomes stationary, and

\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 285.



soon retrograde. Our poet, when taken from the free-school of Stratford, had not only to direct his attention to business, in order to assist in warding off from his father's family the menacing approach of poverty ; but it is likewise probable that his leisure, as we shall notice more at large in the next chapter, was engaged in other acquisitions ; and when at a subsequent period, and after he had become a married man, his efforts were thrown into a channel perfectly congenial to his taste and talents, still to procure subsistence for the day was the immediate stimulus to exertion. Under these circumstances, and when we likewise recollect that *popular* favour and applause were essential to his success, and that nearly to the last period of his life he was a prolific caterer for the public in a species of poetry which called for no recondite or learned resources, it is not probable, nay, it is, indeed, scarcely possible, that he should have had time to cultivate and increase his classical attainments, originally and necessarily superficial. To translations, therefore, and to popular and legendary lore, he was alike directed by policy, by inclination, and by want of leisure ; yet must we still agree, that, had a proficiency in the learned languages been necessary to his career, the means resided within himself, and that, on the basis merely of his school-education, although limited as we have seen it, he might, had he early and steadily directed his attention to the subject, have built the reputation of a scholar.

That the powers, however, of his vast and capacious mind, especially if we consider the shortness of his life, were not expended on such an attempt, we have reason to rejoice ; for though his attainments, as a linguist, were truly trifling, yet his *knowledge* was great, and his *learning*, in the best sense of the term, that is, as distinct from the mere acquisition of language, multifarious, and extensive beyond that of most of his contemporaries. \*

\* " If it were asked from what sources," observes Mr. Capel Lofft, "*Shakspeare* drew these abundant streams of wisdom, carrying with their current the fairest and most unfading flowers of poetry, I should be tempted to say, he had what would be now considered a very reasonable portion of Latin ; he was not wholly ignorant of Greek ; he had a knowledge of the French, so as to read it with ease ; and I believe not less of the Italian. He



It is, therefore, to his *English* studies that we must have recourse for a due estimate of his reading and research; a subject which will be treated of in a future portion of the work.

was habitually conversant in the chronicles of his country. He lived with wise and highly cultivated men; with Jonson, Essex, and Southampton, in familiar friendship. He had deeply imbibed the Scriptures. And his own most acute, profound, active, and original genius (for there never was a truly great poet, nor an aphoristic writer of excellence without these accompanying qualities) must take the lead in the solution." Aphorisms from Shakspeare: Introduction, pp. xii. and xiii.

Again, in speaking of his poems, he remarks — "Transcendent as his original and singular genius was, I think it is not easy, with due attention to *these* poems, to doubt of his having acquired, when a boy, no ordinary facility in the *classic* language of Rome; though his knowledge of it might be small, comparatively, to the knowledge of that great and indefatigable scholar, Ben Jonson. And when Jonson says he had 'less Greek,' had it been true that he had none, it would have been as easy for the verse as for the sentiment to have said 'no Greek.'" — Introduction, p. xxiv.



## CHAPTER III.

SHAKSPEARE, AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL, FOLLOWS HIS FATHER'S TRADE — STATEMENT OF AUBREY — PROBABLY PRESENT IN HIS TWELFTH YEAR, AT KENELWORTH, WHEN ELIZABETH VISITED THE EARL OF LEICESTER — TRADITION OF AUBREY CONCERNING HIM — WHETHER THERE IS REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT, AFTER LEAVING HIS FATHER, HE WAS PLACED IN AN ATTORNEY'S OFFICE WHO WAS LIKEWISE SENESCHAL OR STEWARD OF SOME MANOR — ANECDOTES OF SHAKSPEARE — ALLUSIONS IN HIS WORKS TO BARTON, WILNECOTTE AND BARSTON, VILLAGES IN WARWICKSHIRE — EARTHQUAKE IN 1580 ALLUDED TO — WHETHER, AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL, HE ACQUIRED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN LANGUAGES.

THAT Shakspeare, when taken from the free-school of Stratford, became an assistant to his father in the wool-trade, has been the general opinion of his biographers from the period of Mr. Rowe, who first published the tradition in 1709, to the present day. The anecdote was probably collected by Mr. Betterton the player, who visited Stratford in order to procure intelligence relative to his favourite poet, and from whom Mr. Rowe professes to have derived the greater part of his information.\* A few incidental circumstances tend also to strengthen the account that both father and son were engaged in this employment, and, for a time, together: in the first place, we may mention the discovery already noticed of the arms of the merchants of the wool-staple on a window of the house in which the poet was born †; secondly, the almost certain conclusion that the poverty of John Shakspeare, which we know to have been considerable in 1579,

\* "Mr. Betterton," observes Mr. Malone, "was born in 1635, and had many opportunities of collecting information relative to Shakspeare, but unfortunately the age in which he lived was not an age of curiosity. Had either he or Dryden or Sir William d'Avenant taken the trouble to visit our poet's youngest daughter, who lived till 1662, or his grand-daughter, who did not die till 1670, many particulars might have been preserved which are now irrecoverably lost. Shakspeare's sister, Joan Hart, who was only five years younger than him, died at Stratford in Nov. 1646, at the age of seventy-six; and from her undoubtedly his two daughters, and his grand-daughter Lady Bernard, had learned several circumstances of his early history antecedent to the year 1600." Reed's Shakspeare, p. 119, 120.

† It has already been observed, in a note written some years after the composition of the text, that this supposed corroboration is no longer to be depended upon.



would naturally incline him to require the assistance of his son, in the only way in which, at that time, he could be serviceable to him; and thirdly, we may adduce the following passages from the works of our Dramatist, which seem to imply a more than theoretic intimacy with his father's business. In the *Winter's Tale*, the Clown exclaims,

"Let me see: — Every 'leven wether — tods; every tod yields — pound and odd shilling: fifteen hundred shorn, — What comes the wool to?" *Act IV. Scene 2.*

Upon this passage Dr. Farmer remarks, "that to *tod* is used as a verb by dealers in wool; thus, they say, 'Twenty sheep ought to *tod* fifty pounds of wool,' &c. The meaning, therefore, of the Clown's words is, 'Every eleven wether *tods*; i. e. *will produce a tod*, or twenty-eight pounds of wool; every *tod* yields a pound and some odd shillings; what then will the wool of fifteen hundred yield?' "

"The occupation of his father," subjoins Mr. Malone, "furnished our poet with accurate knowledge on this subject; for two pounds and a half of wool is, I am told, a very good produce from a sheep at the time of shearing."

"*Every 'leven wether — tods*," adds Mr. Ritson, "has been rightly expounded to mean that the wool of *eleven sheep* would weigh a *tod*, or 28lb. Each fleece would, therefore, be 2lb. 8oz. 11½dr., and the whole produce of *fifteen hundred shorn* 136 *tod*, 1 clove, 2lb. 6oz. 2dr. which *at pound and odd shilling per tod*, would yield 143*l.* 3*s.* 0*d.* Our author was too familiar with the subject to be suspected of inaccuracy.

"Indeed it appears from Stafford's *Breefe Concepte of English Pollicye*, 1581, p. 16, that the price of a tod of wool was at that period *twenty or two and twenty shillings*: so that the medium price was exactly '*pound and odd shilling*.' " \*

In *Hamlet*, the prince justly observes,

There's a divinity that *shapes our ends*,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

*Act V. Scene 2.*

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\* Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. ix. p. 322, 323.



Lines, of which the words in italics were considered by Dr. Farmer as merely technical. "A woolman, butcher, and dealer in *skewers*," says Mr. Stevens, "lately observed to him (Dr. F.), that his nephew, an idle lad, could only *assist* him in making them; '— he could *rough-hew* them, but I was obliged to *shape their ends*.' To shape the ends of *wool-skewers*, i. e. to *point* them, requires a degree of skill; any one can *rough-hew* them. Whoever recollects the profession of Shakspeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such terms. I have frequently seen packages of wool pinned up with *skewers*."\*

We may, therefore, after duly considering all the evidence that can now be obtained, pretty confidently acquiesce in the traditional account that Shakspeare was, for a time, and that immediately on his being taken from the free-school, the assistant of his father in the wool-trade; but it will be necessary here to mention, that Aubrey, on whose authority it has been related that John Shakspeare was, at one period of his life, a butcher, adds, with regard to our poet, that "when he was a boy, he exercised his father's trade;" and that "when he killed a calfe, he would do it in a *high style*, and make a speech."† That John Shakspeare, when under the pressure of adversity, might combine the two employments, which are, in a certain degree, connected with each other, we have already recorded as probable; it is very possible, also, that the following similes may have been suggested to the son, by what he had occasionally observed at home:

And as the butcher takes away the calf,  
And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays,  
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house;  
Even so, remorseless, have they borne him hence.  
And as the dam runs lowing up and down,  
Looking the way her harmless young one went,  
And can do nought but wail her darling's loss;  
Even so, &c. &c. *Henry VI. Part II. Act III. Scene 1.*

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 346, 347.

† Aubrey MS. — Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 213.



but that the father of our poet, the former bailiff of Stratford, should employ his children, instead of servants, in the slaughter of his cattle, is a position so revolting, so unnecessarily degrading on the part of the father, and, at the same time, must have been so discordant with the well-known humane and gentle cast of the poet's disposition, that we cannot, for a moment, allow ourselves to conceive that any credibility can be attached to such a report.

At what age he began to assist his father in the wool-trade, cannot now be positively ascertained; but as he was early taken from school, for this purpose, we shall probably not err far, if we suppose this change to have taken place when he was *twelve* years old; a computation which includes a period of scholastic education sufficiently long to have imbued him with just such a portion of classical lore, as an impartial enquirer into his life and works would be willing to admit.

A short time previous to this, when our poet was in his twelfth year, and in the summer of 1575, an event occurred which must have made a great impression on his mind; the visit of Queen Elizabeth to the magnificent Earl of Leicester, at Kenelworth Castle. That young Shakspeare was a spectator of the festivities on this occasion, was first suggested by Bishop Percy \*, who, in his Essay on the Origin of the English Stage, speaking of the old Coventry play of Hock Tuesday, which was performed before Her Majesty during her residence at the castle, observes,—“ Whatever this old play, or ‘ storial show,’ was at the time it was exhibited to Queen Elizabeth, it had probably our young Shakspeare for a spectator, who was then in his twelfth year, and doubtless attended with all the inhabitants of the surrounding country at these ‘ Princely Pleasures of Kenelworth,’ † *whence Stratford is only a few miles distant.* And as the Queen was

\* Mr. Malone is also of opinion that Shakspeare was present at this magnificent reception of Elizabeth. Vide “Inquiry,” p. 150. note 82.

† So denominated from a tract, written by *George Gascoigne* Esq., entitled “The Princely Pleasures of Kenelworth Castle.” It is inserted in *Nichols's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i.



much diverted with the Coventry play, 'whereat Her Majestie laught well,' and rewarded the performers with two bucks, and five marks in money : who, 'what rejoicing upon their ample reward, and what triumphing upon the good acceptance, vaunted their play was never so dignified, nor ever any players before so beatified :' but especially if our young Bard afterwards gained admittance into the castle to see a play, which the same evening, after supper, was there 'presented of a very good theme, but so set forth by the actors' well-handling, that pleasure and mirth made it seem very short, though it lasted two good hours and more, we may imagine what an impression was made on his infant mind. Indeed the dramatic cast of many parts of that superb entertainment, which continued nineteen days, and was the most splendid of the kind ever attempted in this kingdom, must have had a very great effect on a young imagination, whose dramatic powers were hereafter to astonish the world." \*

Of the gorgeous splendour, and elaborate pageantry which were displayed during this princely fete at Kenelworth, some idea may be formed from the following summary. The Earl met the Queen on Saturday the 9th of July 1575, at Long Ichington, a town seven miles from Kenelworth, where His Lordship had erected a tent, for the purpose of banqueting Her Majesty, upon such a magnificent scale, "that justly for dignity," says Laneham, "may be comparable with a beautiful palace ; and for greatness and quantity, with a proper town, or rather a citadel ;" and to give his readers an adequate conception of its vast magnitude, he adds that "it had seven cart load of pins pertaining to it." † At the first entrance of the Queen into His Lordship's castle a floating island was discerned upon the pool, glittering with torches, on which sat the Lady of the Lake, attended by two nymphs, who addressed Her Majesty in verse, with an historical account of the antiquity and owners of the castle ; and the speech

\* Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, vol. i. p. 143. 4th edition.

† Nichols's Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. Laneham's Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle, 1575, p. 50. or 78. of the original pamphlet.



was closed with the sound of cornets, and other instruments of loud music. Within the base-court was erected a stately bridge, twenty feet wide, and seventy feet long, over which the Queen was to pass; and on each side stood columns, with presents upon them to Her Majesty from the gods. Silvanus offered a cage of wild-fowl, and Pomona various sorts of fruits; Ceres gave corn, and Bacchus wine; Neptune presented sea-fish; Mars the habiliments of war; and Phoebus all kinds of musical instruments. During the rest of her stay, varieties of sports and shows were daily exhibited. In the chase was a savage-man clad in ivy accompanied by satyrs; there were bear-baitings and fire-works, Italian tumblers, and a country brideale, running at the Quintain, and Morrice-dancing. And, that no sort of diversion might be omitted, hither came the Coventry-men and acted the old play already mentioned, called Hock Tuesday, a kind of tilting match, representing, in dumb show, the defeat of the Danes by the English, in the reign of King Ethelred. There were besides on the pool, a Triton riding on a Mermaid eighteen feet long, and Arion upon a Dolphin. To grace the entertainment, the Queen here knighted Sir Thomas Cecil, eldest son to the lord treasurer; Sir Henry Cobham, brother to the Lord Cobham; Sir Francis Stanhope, and Sir Thomas Tresham. An estimate may be formed of the expense from the quantity of ordinary beer, that was drank upon this occasion, which amounted to three hundred and twenty hogs-heads. \*

To the ardent and opening mind of our youthful Bard what exquisite delight must this grand festival have imparted, the splendour of which, as Bishop Hurd remarks, "claims a remembrance even in the annals of our country." † A considerable portion of the very mythology which he had just been studying at school, was here brought before his eyes, of which the costume and language were under the direction of the first poets of the age; and the dramatic cast of the

\* Life of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1727. 8vo. p. 92.

† Hurd's Moral and Political Dialogues, vol. i. p. 148. Edit. of 1788.



whole pageantry, whether classical or Gothic, was such, as probably to impress his glowing imagination with that bias for theatrical amusements, which afterwards proved the basis of his own glory, and of his country's poetic fame.

Here, could he revisit the glimpses of the day, how justly might he deplore, in his own inimitable language, the havoc of time, and the mutability of human grandeur; of this princely castle, once the seat of feudal hospitality, of revelry and song, and of which Laneham, in his quaint style and orthography, has observed,—“Who that considerz untoo the stately seat of *Kenelworth Castl*, the rare beauty of bilding that His Honor hath avaunced; all of the hard quarry-stone: every room so spacious, so well belighted, and so hy roofed within; so seemly too sight by du proportion without; a day tyme, on every side so glittering by glasse; a night, by continuall brightnesse of candel, fyre, and torch-light, transparent thro the lyghtsome wyndow, as it wear the *Egyptian Pharos* relucet untoo all the *Alexandrian* coast: or els (too talke merily with my mery freend) thus radiant, as though *Phæbus* for hiz eaz woold rest him in the *Castl*, and not every night so to travel doown untoo the *Antipodes*; heertoo so fully furnisht of rich apparell and utensilez apted in all points to the best;”\* of this vast pile the very ruins are now so reduced, that the grand gateway, and the banquetting hall, eighty-six feet in length, and forty-five in width, are the only important remains. †

\* Laneham's Account, p. 65. of the Original.

† The following extract from Laneham's Letter, which immediately follows the passage given in the text, and in which I have dropped the author's singular orthography, will afford the reader a curious and very entertaining description of the costly and magnificent gardens of Kenelworth Castle, gardens in which it is probable the youthful Shakpeare had more than once wandered with delight:—

“Unto this, His Honour's exquisite appointment of a beautiful garden, an acre or more of quantity, that lieth on the north there: wherein hard all along the castle-wall is reared a pleasant terrace of a ten foot high, and a twelve broad: even under foot, and fresh of fine grass; as is also the side thereof toward the garden, in which, by sundry equal distances, with obelisks, spheres, and white bears, all of stone, upon their curious bases, by goodly shew were set: to these two fine arbours redolent by sweet trees and flowers, at each end one, the garden plot under that, with fair allies green by grass, even voided from the



If Shakspeare were taken as early from school as we have supposed, and his slender attainments in latinity strongly warrant the supposition, it is more than probable, building on the traditional hint in Rowe, of

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borders a both sides, and some (for change) with sand, not light or too soft or soily by dust, but smooth and firm, pleasant to walk on, as a sea-shore when the water is availd: then, much gracified by due proportion of four even quarters: in the midst of each, upon a base a two foot square, and high, seemly bordered of itself, a square pilaster rising pyramidally of a fifteen foot high: simmetrically pierced through from a foot beneath, until a two foot of the top: whereupon for a capital, an orb of a ten inches thick: every of these (with his base) from the ground to the top, of one whole piece; hewn out of hard porphery, and with great art and heed (thinks me) thither conveyed and there erected. Where, further also, by great cast and cost, the sweetness of savour on all sides, made so respirant from the redolent plants and fragrant herbs and flowers, in form, colour, and quantity so deliciously variant; and fruit-trees bedecked with apples, pears, and ripe cherries.

“ And unto these, in the midst against the terrace, a square cage, sumptuous and beautiful, joined hard to the north wall (that a that side gards the garden as the garden the castle), of a rare form and excellency, was raised: in height a twenty foot, thirty long, and a fourteen broad. From the ground strong and close, reared breast high, wheréat a soil of a fair moulding was couched all about: from that upward, four great windows a front, and two at each end, every one a five foot wide, as many more even above them, divided on all parts by a transome and architrave, so likewise ranging about the cage. Each window arched in the top, and parted from other in even distance by flat fair bolted columns, all in form and beauty like, that supported a comely cornish couched all along upon the bole square; which with a wire net, finely knit, of meshes six square, an inch wide (as it were for a flat roof) and likewise the space of every window with great cunning and comeliness, even and tight was all over-strained. Under the cornish again, every part beautified with great diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires; pointed, tabled, rok and round; garnished with their gold, by skilful head and hand, and by toil and pencil so lively expressed, as it mought be great marvel and pleasure to consider how near excellency of art could approach unto perfection of nature.

“ Holes were there also and caverns in orderly distance and fashion, voided into the wall, as well for heat, for coolness, for roost a nights and refuge in weather, as also for breeding when time is. More, fair even and fresh holly-trees for pearching and proining, set within, toward each end one.

“ Hereto, their diversity of meats, their fine several vessels for their water and sundry grains; and a man skilful and diligent to look to them and tend them.

“ But (shall I tell you) the silver sounded lute, without the sweet touch of hand; the glorious golden cup, without the fresh fragrant wine; or the rich ring with gem, without the fair featured finger; is nothing indeed in his proper grace and use: even so His Honour accounted of this mansion, till he had placed their tenants according. Had it therefore replenished with lively birds, *English, French, Spanish, Canarian*, and (I am deceived if I saw not some) *African*. Whereby, whether it became more delightsome in



his aid being *wanted at home* \*, that he continued to assist his father in the wool-trade for some years; that is, in all likelihood, until his sixteenth or eighteenth year. Mr. Malone, however, not adverting

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change of tunes, and harmony to the ear; or else in difference of colours, kinds, and properties to the eye, I'll tell you if I can, when I have better bethought me.

"In the centre (as it were) of this goodly garden, was there placed a very fair fountain, cast into an eight-square, reared a four foot high; from the midst whereof a column up set in shape of two Atlants joined together a back half; the one looking east, tother west, with their hands upholding a fair formed bowl of a three foot over; from whence sundry fine pipes did lively distill continual streams into the receipt of the fountain, maintained still two foot deep by the same fresh falling water: wherein pleasantly playing to and fro, and round about, carp, tench, bream, and for variety, perch, and eel, fish fair-looking all, and large: In the top, the *ragged staff*; which with the bowl, the pillar, and eight sides beneath, were all hewn out of rich and hard white marble. A one side *Nep-tune* with his trident fusk in triumphing in his throne, trailed into the deep by his marine horses. On another, *Thetis* in her chariot drawn by her dolphins. Then *Triton* by his fishes. Here *Proteus* herding his sea-bulls. There *Doris* and her daughters solacing a sea and sands. The waves scourging with froth and foam, intermingled in place, with whales, whirlpools, sturgeons, tunnies, conchs, and wealks, all engraven by exquisite device and skill, so as I may think this not much inferior unto *Phæbus* gates, which (Ovid says) and peradventure a pattern to this, that *Vulcan* himself did cut: whereof such was the excellency of art, that the work in value surmounted the stuff, and yet were the gates all of clean massy silver.

"Here were things, ye see, mought inflame any mind to long after looking: but whoso was found so hot in desire, with the wreast of a cok was sure of a cooler: water spurting upward with such vehemency, as they should by and by be moistened from top to toe; the he's to some laughing, but the she's to more sport. This some time was occupied to very good pastime.

"A garden then so appointed, as wherein aloft upon sweet shawdowed walk of terrace, in heat of summer, to feel the pleasant whisking wind above, or delectable coolness of the fountain spring beneath: to taste of delicious strawberries, cherries and other fruits, even from their stalks: to smell such fragrancy of sweet odours, breathing from the plants, herbs, and flowers: to hear such natural melodious musick and tunes of birds: to have in eye, for mirth, some time these under springing streams; then, the woods, the waters (for both pool and chase were hard at hand in sight,) the deer, the people (that out of the east arbour in the base court also at hand in view,) the fruits trees, the plants, the herbs, the flowers, the change in colours, the birds flittering, the fountain streaming, the fish swimming, all in such delectable variety, order, dignity; whereby, at one moment, in one place, at hand, without travel, to have so full fruition of so many God's blessings, by entire delight unto all senses (if all can take) at once: for *etymon* of the word worthy to be called *Paradise*: and though not so goodly as *Paradise* for want of the fair rivers, yet better a great deal by the lack of so unhappy a tree." Pages 66—72.

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 59.



to this tradition, has, in a note to Rowe's Life, declared his belief, "that, *on leaving school*, Shakspeare was placed in the office of some country attorney, or the seneschal of some manor court\*:" a position which we think improbable only in *point of time*; and, in justice to Mr. Malone, it must be added, that in other places he has given a much wider latitude to the period of this engagement.

The circumstances on which this conjecture has been founded, are these:—that, in the first place, throughout the dramas of Shakspeare, there is interspersed such a vast variety of legal phrases and allusions, expressed with such *technical* accuracy, as to force upon the mind a conviction, that the person who had used them must have been intimately acquainted with the profession of the law; and, secondly, that at the close of Aubrey's manuscript anecdotes of Shakspeare, which are said to have been collected, at an early period, from the information of the neighbours of the poet, it is positively asserted, that our bard "understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." †

On the first of these data, it has been observed by Mr. Malone, in his "Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakspeare were written," that the poet's "knowledge of legal terms is not merely such as might be acquired by the casual observation of even his all-comprehending mind; it has the appearance of *technical* skill; and he is so fond of displaying it on all occasions, that I suspect he was early initiated in at least the forms of law, and was employed, *while he yet remained at Stratford*, in the office of some country-attorney, who was at the same time a petty conveyancer, and perhaps also the seneschal of some manor-court." ‡ In confirmation of this opinion, various instances are given of his legal phraseology, which we have copied in the note below §; and here we must remark that the expres-

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 60. note 7.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 214.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 276.

§ "For what in me was *purchased*,  
Falls upon thee in a much fairer sort." *K. Hen. IV. P. II.*



sion, while he yet remained at Stratford, leaves the period of his first application to the law, from the time at which he left school to the era

"Purchase is here used in its strict legal sense, in contradistinction to an acquisition by descent.

'Unless the devil have him in *fee-simple*, with *fine* and *recovery*.'

*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

'He is *'rested on the case*.'

*Comedy of Errors.*

'—— with *bills* on their necks, Be it known unto all men by these presents,' &c.

*As you like it.*

'—— who writes himself *armigero*, in any *bill*, *warrant*, *quittance*, or *obligation*.'

*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

'Go with me to a notary, seal me there

Your *single bond*.'

*Merchant of Venice.*

'Say, for non-payment that the debt should double.'

*Venus and Adonis.*

"On a conditional bond's becoming forfeited for non-payment of money borrowed, the whole penalty, which is usually the double of the principal sum lent by the obligee, was formerly recoverable at law. To this our poet here alludes.

'But the defendant doth that plea deny;

To *'cide* his title, is impanell'd

A quest of thoughts.'

*Sonnet 46.*

"In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Dogberry charges the watch to keep their fellow's counsel and their own. This Shakspeare transferred from the oath of a grand jurymen.

'And let my officers of such a nature

Make an *extent* upon his house and lands.'

*As you like it.*

'He was taken *with the manner*.'

*Love's Labour's lost.*

'*Enfeof'd* himself to popularity.'

*K. Hen. IV. P. I.*

'He will seal the *fee-simple* of his salvation, and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.'

*All's Well that ends Well.*

'Why, let her *accept before excepted*.'

*Twelfth Night.*

'—— which is four terms or two actions; — and he shall laugh without *intervallums*.'

*K. Hen. IV. P. II.*

'—— keeps *leets* and *law-days*.'

*K. Richard II.*

'Pray in aid for kindness.'

*Anthony and Cleopatra.*

"No writer but one who had been conversant with the technical language of leases and other conveyances, would have used *determination* as synonymous to *end*. Shakspeare frequently uses the word in that sense. See vol. xii. (Reed's Shakspeare,) p. 202. n. 2.;



of his visiting London, unfixed; a portion of time which we may fairly estimate as including the lapse of *ten* years.

With regard to the affirmation of Aubrey, that Shakspeare had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country, the same ingenious critic very justly remarks, that "many traditional anecdotes, though not perfectly accurate, contain an adumbration of the truth;" and then adds, "I am strongly inclined to think that the assertion contains, though not the truth, yet something like it: I mean that Shakspeare had been employed for some time in his younger years as a *teacher* in the country; though Dr. Farmer has incontestably proved, that he could not have been a teacher of *Latin*. I have already suggested my opinion, that before his coming to London he had acquired some share of legal knowledge in the office of a petty country-conveyancer, or in that of the steward of some manorial court. *If he began to apply to this study at the age of eighteen, two years afterwards*

vol. xiii. p. 127. n. 4.; and (Mr. Malone's edit.) vol. x. p. 202. n. 8. 'From and after the *determination* of such a term,' is the regular language of conveyancers.

'Humbly complaining to Your Highness.' *K. Richard III.*

'Humbly complaining to Your Lordship, your orator,' &c. are the first words of every bill in chancery.

'A kiss in fee farm! In witness whereof these parties interchangeably have set their hands and seals.' *Troilus and Cressida.*

'Art thou a *feodary* for this act?' *Cymbeline.*

"See the note on that passage, vol. xviii. p. 507, 508. n. 3. Reed's edit.

'Are those *precepts* served?' says Shallow to Davy, in *K. Henry IV.*

"*Precept* in this sense is a word only known in the office of a justice of peace.

'Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,

Can'st thou *demise* to any child of mine?' *K. Richard III.*

'—— hath *demised*, granted, and to farm let,' is the constant language of leases. What *poet* but Shakspeare has used the word *demised* in this sense?

"Perhaps it may be said, that our author in the same manner may be proved to have been equally conversant with the terms of divinity or physic. Whenever as large a number of instances of his ecclesiastical or medicinal knowledge shall be produced, what has now been stated will certainly not be entitled to any weight." Malone, Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 276. n. 9.



he might have been sufficiently conversant with conveyances to have *taught others* the form of such legal assurances as are usually prepared by country-attorneys; and perhaps spent two or three years in this employment before he removed from Stratford to London. Some uncertain rumour of this kind might have continued to the middle of the last century, and by the time it reached Mr. Aubrey, our poet's original occupation was changed from a scrivener to that of a school-master." \*

In this quotation it will be immediately perceived that the period of our author's application to the study of the law, is now supposed to have occurred *at the age of eighteen*, when he must have been long removed from school, and that he is also conceived to have been a *teacher* of what he had acquired in the profession.

These conjectures of Mr. Malone, which, in their latter and modified state, appear to me singularly happy, have met with a warm advocate in Mr. Whiter: "The anecdotes," he remarks, "which have been delivered down to us respecting our poet, appear to me neither improbable nor, when duly examined, inconsistent with each other: even those which seem least allied to probability, contain in my opinion the *adumbrata*, if not *expressa signa veritatis*. Mr. Malone has admirably sifted the accounts of *Aubrey*; and there is no truth, that is obtained by a train of reasoning not reducible to demonstration, of which I am more convinced than the conjecture of Mr. Malone, who supposes that Shakspeare, before he quitted Stratford, was employed in such matters of business as belonged to the office of a country-attorney, or the steward of a manor-court. I have stated his conjecture in general terms, that the *fact*, as it relates to our poet's *legal allusions*, might be separated from any accidental circumstances of *historical truth*. I am astonished, however, that Mr. Malone has confirmed his conjecture by so few examples. I can supply him with a very large accession." †

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 222, 223.

† Whiter's Specimen of a Commentary, p. 95. note. As Mr. Whiter has not chosen to append these additional examples, I have thought it would be satisfactory to give the few which more immediately occur to my memory.



Mr. Chalmers, however, refuses his aid in the structure of this conjectural fabric, and asserts that Shakspeare might have derived all his technical knowledge of the law from a very few books. "From Totell's Presidents, 1572; from Pulton's Statutes, 1578; and from the Lawier's Logike, 1588." \*

That these books were read by Shakespeare, there can, we think, be little doubt; but this concession by no means militates against the idea of his having been employed for a short period in some profitable branch of the law. After weighing all the evidence which can now be adduced, either for or against the hypothesis, we shall probably make the nearest approximation to the truth in concluding, that the object of our research, having assisted his father for some years in the wool-trade, for which express purpose he had been early taken from school, might deem it necessary, on the prospect of approaching marriage, to acquire some additional means of supporting a domestic establishment, and, accordingly, annexed to his former occupation, or superseded it, by a knowledge of an useful branch of

"Immediately provided in that case." *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"Royally attornied." *Winter's Tale.*

"That doth utter all men's ware-a." *Winter's Tale.*

"Thy title is *affeer'd*." (This is a law-term for confirmed.)

"Keep leets, and law-days, and in sessions sit." *Othello.*

"Why should calamity be full of words?"  
Windy *attorneys* to their *client* woes. *Richard III.*

"But when the heart's *attorney* once is mute,  
The *client* breaks, as desperate in his suit." *Venus and Adonis.*

"So now I have confessed that he is thine,  
And I myself am *mortgaged to thy will*." *Sonnet 134.*

"He learn'd but, *surety-like*, to write for me,  
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.  
The *statute* of thy beauty, &c." *Sonnet 134.*

\* Chalmers's Apology, p. 554. The "Lawiers Logike" was written by Abraham Fraunce.



the law, which, by being taught to others, might prove to himself a source of revenue. Thus combining the record of Rowe with the tradition of Aubrey, and with the evidence derived from our author's own works, an inference has been drawn which, though not amounting to certainty, approaches the confine of it with no small pretensions.

Of the events and circumstances which must have occurred to Shakspeare in the interval between his leaving the free-school of Stratford, and his marriage, scarcely any thing has transpired; the following anecdote, however, which is still preserved at Stratford and the neighbouring village of Bidford, may be ascribed with greater propriety to this than to any subsequent period of his life. We shall give it in the words of the author of the "Picturesque Views on the Avon," who professes to have received it on the spot, as one of the traditional treasures of the place. Speaking of Bidford, which is still equally notorious for the excellence of its ale, and the thirsty clay of its inhabitants, he adds, "there were antiently two societies of village-yeomanry in this place, who frequently met under the appellation of Bidford Topers. It was a custom with these heroes to challenge any of their neighbours, famed for the love of good ale, to a drunken combat: among others the people of Stratford were called out to a trial of strength, and in the number of their champions, as the traditional story runs, our Shakspeare, who forswore all thin potations, and addicted himself to ale as lustily as Falstaff to his sack, is said to have entered the lists. In confirmation of this tradition we find an epigram written by Sir Aston Cockayne, and published in his poems in 1658, p. 124: it runs thus —

TO MR. CLEMENT FISHER, OF WINCOT.

SHAKSPEARE, your *Wincot* ale hath much renown'd,  
That fox'd a beggar so (by chance was found  
Sleeping) that there needed not many a word  
To make him to believe he was a lord:



But you affirm (and in it seems most eager)  
 'Twill make a lord as drunk as any beggar.  
 Bid *Norton* brew such ale as Shakspeare fancies  
 Did put Kit Sly into such lordly trances :  
 And let us meet there (for a fit of gladness)  
 And drink ourselves merry in sober sadness.

“ When the Stratford lads went over to Bidford, they found the toppers were gone to Evesham fair ; but were told, if they wished to try their strength with the sippers, they were ready for the contest. This being acceded to, our bard and his companions were staggered at the first outset, when they thought it adviseable to sound a retreat, while the means of retreat were practicable ; and then had scarce marched half a mile, before they were all forced to lay down more than their arms, and encamp in a very disorderly and unmilitary form, under no better covering than a large crab-tree ; and there they rested till morning :

“ This tree is yet standing by the side of the road. If, as it has been observed by the late Mr. T. Warton, the meanest hovel to which Shakspeare has an allusion interests curiosity, and acquires an importance, surely the tree that has spread its shade over him, and sheltered him from the dews of the night, has a claim to our attention.

“ In the morning, when the company awakened our bard, the story says they intreated him to return to Bidford, and renew the charge ; but this he declined, and looking round upon the adjoining villages, exclaimed, ‘ No ! I have had enough ; I have drank with

Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,  
 Haunted Hillbro, Hungry Grafton,  
 Dudging Exhall, Papist Wicksford,  
 Beggarly Broom, and Drunken Bidford.’

“ Of the truth of this story I have very little doubt : it is certain that the crab-tree is known all round the country by the name of Shakspeare’s crab ; and that the villages to which the allusion is made, all bear the epithets here given them : the people of Pebworth are still famed for their skill on the pipe and tabor : Hillborough



is now called Haunted Hillborough ; and Grafton is notorious for the poverty of its soil." \*

To the immediate neighbourhood indeed of Stratford, and to the adjacent country, with which, at this early period of his life, our poet seems to have been familiarised by frequent excursions either of pleasure or business, are to be found some allusions in his dramatic works. In the *Taming of the Shrew*, Christopher Sly, being treated with great ceremony and state, on waking in the bed-chamber of the nobleman, exclaims—"What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of *Burton-heath*; by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of *Wincot*, if she know me not: if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom. What, I am not bestraught!" †

There are two villages in Warwickshire called *Burton Dorset* and *Burton Hastings*; but that which was the residence of old Sly, is, in all probability, *Burton on the Heath*, on the south side of the Avon, opposite to Bidford, and about eighteen miles from Stratford. The first scene of the play is described as *Before an Alehouse on a Heath*, and it is remarkable that on Burton-heath there still remains a tenement, which was formerly a public-house, under the name of Woncott or Onecott: yet there is much reason to conclude, from the mode in which Wincot is spoken of, both in this place, and in the following passage, that Burton-heath and Wincot were considerably distant: in the Second Part of King Henry IV. Davy says to Justice Shallow, "I beseech you, Sir, to countenance William Visor of *Wincot* against Clemont Perkes of the hill ‡," a phraseology which seems to imply, not an insulated house, but a village, an inference which is strongly supported by the fact that near Stratford there is actually a village with the closely resembling name of *Wilnecotte*, which, in the pronunciation and orthography of the common people, would almost

\* Ireland's Picturesque Views, p. 229—233.

† Act i. sc. 2. ‡ Act v. sc. 1.



necessarily become *Wincot*. It should likewise be mentioned that Mr. Warton is of opinion that this is the place to which Shakspeare alludes, and he adds, "the house kept by our genial hostess still remains, but is at present a mill." \*

We are indebted also to the Second Part of King Henry IV. for another local allusion of a similar kind: Silence, addressing Pistol, nicknames him "goodman Puff of *Bårson* †," a village which, under this appellation, and that of *Barston*, is situated between Coventry and Solyhall. It may indeed excite some surprise that we have not more allusions of this nature to commemorate; that the scenery which occurred to him early in life, and especially at this period, when the imagery drawn from nature must have been impressed on his mind in a manner peculiarly vivid and defined, when he was free from care, unshackled by a family, and at liberty to roam where fancy led him, has not been delineated in some portion of his works, with such accuracy as immediately to designate its origin. For, if we consider the excursive powers of his imagination, and the desultory and unsettled habits which tradition has ascribed to him during his youthful residence at Stratford, we may assert, without fear of contradiction, and as an undoubted truth, that his rambles into the country, and for a poet's purpose, were both frequent and extensive, and that not a stream, a wood, or hamlet, within many miles of his native town, was unvisited by him at various times and under various circumstances.

Yet, if we can seldom point out in his works any distinct reference to the actual scenery of Stratford and its neighbourhood, we may observe, that few of the remarkable events of his own time appear to have escaped his notice; and among these may be found one which occurred at this juvenile period of his life, and to which we have an allusion in *Romeo and Juliet*; for though the personages of the

\* Mr. Edwards and Mr. Steevens have conjectured that *Barton* and *Woodmancot*, vulgarly pronounced *Woncot*, in Gloucestershire, might be the places meant by Shakspeare; and Mr. Tollet remarks, that *Woncot*, may be put for *Wolphmancote*, vulgarly *Ovencote*, in Warwickshire. Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 30., and vol. xii. p. 240.

† Act v. sc. 3.



drama exist and act in a foreign clime, yet in this, and in many similar instances, he hesitates not to describe the events of his native country as occurring wherever he has chosen to lay the scene. Thus the nurse, describing to Lady Capulet the age at which Juliet was weaned, says

“ 'Tis since the *earthquake* now eleven years,”—

a line, which, as Mr. Tyrwhitt and Mr. Malone have observed\*, manifestly alludes to a phenomenon of this kind that had been felt throughout England in the year 1580, and of which Holinshed, the favourite historian of our bard, has given the following striking account:—“ On the sixt of April (1580), being Wednesdaie in Easter weeke, about six of the clocke toward evening, a sudden earthquake happening in London, and almost generallie throughout all England, caused such an amazednesse among the people as was wonderfull for the time, and caused them to make their earnest praiers to Almighty God! The great clocke bell in the palace at Westminster strake of it selfe against the hammer with the shaking of the earth, as diverse other clocks and bels in the steeples of the cities of London and elsewhere did the like. The gentlemen of the Temple being then at supper, ran from the tables, and out of their hall with their knives in their hands. The people assembled at the plaie-houses in the fields, as at the Whoreater (the Theater I would saie) were so amazed, that doubting the ruine of the galleries, they made hast to be gone. A péece of the Temple church fell downe, some stones fell from Saint Paule's church in London: and at Christ's church neere to Newgate-market, in the sermon while, a stone fell from the top of the same church, which stone killed out of hand one Thomas Greie an apprentice, and another stone fell on his fellow-servant named Mabell Eueret, and so brused hir that she lived but four daies after. Diverse other at that time in that place were sore hurt, with running out of the church one over an other for feare. The tops of diverse chimnies in the citie fell

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 38. n. 2.



downe, the houses were so shaken : a part of the castell at Bishops Stratford in Essex fell downe. This earthquake indured in or about London not passing one minute of an houre, and was no more felt. But afterward in Kent, and on the sea coast it was felt three times ; and at Sandwich at six of the clocke the land not onelie quaked, but the sea also fomed, so that the ships tottered. At Dover also the same houre was the like, so that a péece of the cliffe fell into the sea, with also a péece of the castell wall there : a piece of Saltwood castell in Kent fell downe : and in the church of Hide the bells were heard to sound. A peece of Sutton church in Kent fell downe, the earthquake being there not onlie felt, but also heard. And in all these places and others in east Kent, the same earthquake was felt three times to move, to wit, at six, at nine, and at eleven of the clocke." \* In this passage, to which we shall again have occasion to revert, the violence and universality of the event described, are such as would almost necessarily form an era for reference in the poet's mind ; and the date, indeed, of the *prima stamina* of the play in which the line above-mentioned is found, may be nearly ascertained by this allusion.

If, as some of his commentators have supposed, Shakspeare possessed any grammatical knowledge of the French and Italian languages, it is highly probable that the acquisition must have been obtained in the interval which took place between his quitting the grammar-school of Stratford and his marriage, a period, if our arrangement be admitted, of about six years ; and consequently, any consideration of the subject will almost necessarily claim a place at the close of this chapter.

That the dramas of our great poet exhibit numerous instances in which both these languages are introduced, and especially the former, of which we have an entire scene in Henry V., will not be denied by any reader of his works ; nor will any person, acquainted with the literature of his times, venture to affirm, that he might not have acquired by his own industry, and through the medium of the introduc-

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, vol. iv. p. 426. edit. of 1808.



tory books then in circulation, a sufficient knowledge of French and Italian for all the purposes which he had in view. We cannot therefore agree with Dr. Farmer, when he asserts, that Shakspeare's acquaintance with these languages consisted only of *a familiar phrase or two picked up in the writers of the time, or the course of his conversation.* \*

The corrupted state of the French and Italian passages, as found in the early editions of our poet's plays, can be no argument that he was totally ignorant of these languages; as it would apply with nearly equal force to prove that he was similarly situated with regard to his vernacular tongue, which in almost every scene of these very editions has undergone various and gross corruptions. Nor will greater conviction result, when it is affirmed that this foreign phraseology might be the interpolation of the players; for it remains to be ascertained, that they possessed a larger portion of exotic literature than Shakspeare himself.

The author of an essay on Shakspeare's learning in the *Censura Literaria*, from which we have already quoted a passage in favour of his having made some progress in latinity, is likewise of opinion that his knowledge of the French was greater than Dr. Farmer is willing to allow.

"I have been confirmed in this opinion," he observes, "by a casual discovery of Shakspeare having imitated a whole French line and description in a long French epic poem, written by Garnier, called the *Henriade*, like Voltaire's, and on the same subject, first published in 1594.

"In *As You Like It*, Shakspeare gives an affecting description of the different manners of men in the different ages of life, which closes with these lines:

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 85. Mr. Capel Lofft's opinion of the Italian literature of Shakspeare is somewhat more extended than my own. "My impression," says he, "is, that Shakspeare was not unacquainted with the most popular authors in *Italian prose*: and that his ear had listened to the enchanting tones of *Petrarca* and some others of their great poets." Preface to his *Laura*, p. cxcii.



“ What ends this strange eventful history  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.”

“ Now — why have recourse for an insipid preposition to a language of which he is said to have been totally ignorant? I always supposed therefore that there must have been some peculiar circumstance well known in those times, which must have induced him to give this motley garb to his language: —but what that circumstance was I could not discover until I accidentally in a foreign literary journal, met with a review of a republication of that poem of Garnier at Paris, in which were inserted, as a specimen of the poem, a description of the appearance of the ghost of Admiral Coligny on the night after his murder at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and in the following lines:

“ *Sans pieds, sans mains, sans nez, sans oreilles, sans yeux,  
Meurtri de toutes parts; la barbe et les cheveux  
Poudreux, ensanglanté, chose presque incroyable!  
Tant cette vision étoit triste et horrible!*”

“ Here it immediately appeared to what author Shakspeare had gone for the archetype of his own description of the last stage of old age, which, by a parody on the above lines, he meant to represent like to that mutilated ghost; and this seems to indicate that he had read that poem in the original; for we even find the *meurtri de toutes parts* imitated by *sans every thing*. A friend of mine formerly mentioned this to Mr. Steevens, and he has briefly noticed this parody, if I recollect rightly, in his joint edition along with Johnson \*, but he did not copy the original lines of Garnier; nor so far as I know any editor since; which however are too remarkable to be altogether consigned to oblivion; and it is not very likely, that any Englishman will ever read through that long dull poem; neither should I myself have known of

\* This notice does not appear in the Variorum edition of 1803.

those lines, if they had not been quoted as a specimen. Steevens's note is so very brief as to be quite obscure in regard to what consequence he thought deducible from the imitation: he seems to suggest as if there might have been some English translation of the poem published, though now unknown; this is the constant refuge for Shakspeare's knowledge of any thing written originally in another language. But even if the fact were true, yet no translator would have preserved the repetition of that word *sans*; for this he must have gone to the French poem itself, therefore must at least have been able to read that line in French, if not also the whole description of the ghost; and if that, why not able also to read other French books? It may indeed, be *supposed*, that some friend may have shown him the above description, and explained to him the meaning of the French lines, but this is only to make a second supposition in order to support a former one made without sufficient foundation: we may just as well make a single supposition at once, that he was himself able to read and understand it, since he has evidently derived from it his own description of the decrepitude of old age. Upon the whole, if his copy of a single word from Holinshed, viz. 'on *this* side Tiber,' is a proof of his having read that historian, why also is not his copy of the repetition of *sans*, and his parody of Coligny's ghost, an equally good proof of his having read the poem of Garnier in the original French language? To reason otherwise is to say, that when he gives us bad French, this proves him not to understand it; and that when he gives us good French, applied with propriety and even with ingenuity, yet this again equally proves that he neither understood what he wrote, nor was so much as able to read the French lines, which he has thus so wittily imitated. \*

Dr. Farmer has himself granted that Shakspeare *began* to learn Latin: why then not allow, from premises still more copious and convincing, that he began likewise to learn French and Italian?

\* Censura Literaria, vol. ix. p. 287. et seq.



That he wanted not inclination for the attempt, the frequent use of these languages in his works will sufficiently evince; that he had some leisure at the period which we have appropriated to these acquisitions, namely, between the years 1576 and 1582, few will be disposed to deny; and that he had books which might enable him to make some progress in these studies, the following list will ascertain:—

1. A Treatyse English and French right necessarye and profitable for all young Children. 1560.
2. Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar, &c. Newly corrected and imprinted by Wykes: 1560, reprinted 1567.
3. The Italian Grammar and Dictionary: By W. Thomas. 1561.
4. Lentulo's Italian Grammar, put into English: By Henry Grenthem. 1578.
5. Ploiche, Peter, Introduction to the French Tongue. 1578.
6. An Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionarie, containing foure sundrie tongues: namelie, English, Latine, Greeke, and French: By I. Baret, 1580.\*

In short, with regard to the literature of Shakspeare, the nearest approximation to the truth will be found to arise from taking a medium course between the conclusions of Dr. Farmer, and of those who have gone into a contrary extreme. That he had made some and that the usual progress in the Latin language during the short period of his school-education, it is, we think, in vain to deny; but that he ever attained the power of reading a Roman classic with facility, cannot with any probability be affirmed: it will be likewise, we are disposed to believe, equally rational and correct, if we conclude, from the evidence which his genius and his works afford, that his acquaintance with the French and Italian languages was not merely confined to the picking up *a familiar phrase or two* from the conversation or writings of others, but that he had actually commenced, and at an early period too, the study of these languages, though, from his

\* Vide Chalmers's Apology, p. 549. and Bibliotheca Reediana, p. 9.

situation, and the circumstances of his life, he had neither the means nor the opportunity of cultivating them to any considerable extent. \*

\* Since these observations were written, a work has fallen into my hands under the title of "A Tour in Quest of Genealogy, through several parts of Wales, Somersetshire, and Wiltshire, in a Series of Letters to a Friend in Dublin; interspersed with a description of Stourhead and Stonehenge; together with various Anecdotes and curious Fragments from a Manuscript Collection ascribed to Shakspeare. By a Barrister." London, 1811.

These manuscripts ascribed to Shakspeare, which, from the language and sentiment of almost every line, are manifestly a mere fiction, are said to have been purchased at an auction at Carmarthen, consisting of verses and letters that passed between Shakspeare and his mistress Anne Hatheway, together with letters to and from him and others, a journal of Shakspeare, an account of many of his plays, memoirs of his life by himself, &c. I have mentioned the publication in this place, as it is worthy of remark, that the fabricator of these MSS., whoever he is, appears to have entertained an idea similar to my own, with regard to the period when our poet attempted the acquisition of the modern languages; for of the supposed memoirs said to be written by Shakspeare himself, the following, among others, is given as a specimen:—

"Having an earnest desier to lerne forraine tonges, it was mie good happ to have in mie fathere's howse an Italian, one Girolama Albergi, tho he went bye the name of Francesco Manzini, a dier of woole; but he was not what he wished to passe for; he had the breeding of a gentilman, and was a righte sounde scholer. It was he taught me the littel Italian I know, and rubbed up my Latten; we redd Bandello's Novells together, from the which I gatherid some delliceous flowres to stick in mie dramattick poseys. He was newew to Battisto Tibaldi, who made a translacion of the Greek poete, Homar, into Italian; he showed me a copy of it given him by hys kinsman, Ercole Tibaldi." P. 202.

I must do the author of this literary forgery, however, the justice to say, that in taste and genius he is immeasurably beyond his youthful predecessor, and that some of the verses ascribed to *Anna Hatheway*, as he terms her, possess no inconsiderable beauties. It is most extraordinary, however, that any individual should venture to bring forward the following lines, which are exquisitely modern in their structure, as the production of a cottage girl of the sixteenth century.

#### TO THE BELOVYD OF THE MUSES AND MEE.

SWEETE swanne of Avon, thou whoose art  
Can mould at will the human hart,  
Can drawe from all who reade or heare,  
The unresisted smile and teare:

By thee a vyllege maiden found,  
No care had I for measured sounde;  
To dresse the fleese that Willie wrought  
Was all I knewe, was all I sought.



## CHAPTER IV.

SHAKSPEARE MARRIED TO ANNE HATHAWAY — ACCOUNT OF THE HATHAWAYS — COTTAGE AT SHOTTERY — BIRTH OF HIS ELDEST CHILD, SUSANNA — HAMNET AND JUDITH BAPTIZED — ANECDOTE OF SHAKSPEARE — APPARENTLY SETTLED IN THE COUNTRY.

SHAKSPEARE married and became the father of a family at a very early period ; at a period, indeed, when most young men, even in his own days, had only completed their school-education. He had probably been attached also to the object of his affections, who resided very near to him, for a year or two previous to the nuptial connection, which took place in 1582 ; and Mr. Malone is inclined to believe that the ceremony was performed either at Hampton-Lacy, or at Billesley, in the August of that year\*, when consequently the poet had not attained the age of eighteen and a half !

The maiden name of the lady who had induced her lover to enter thus early on the world, with little more than his passion to console, and his genius to support them, was *Anne Hathaway*, the daughter of

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At thie softe lure too quicke I flewe,  
Enamored of thie songe I grew ;  
The distaffe soone was layd aside,  
And all mie woork thie straynes supply'd.

Thou gavest at first th' enchanting quill,  
And everie kiss convay'd thie skill ;  
Unfelt, ye maides, ye cannot tell  
The wondrous force of suche a spell.

Nor marvell if thie breath transfuse  
A charme replete with everie muse ;  
They cluster rounde thie lippes, and thyne  
Distill their sweetes improv'd on myne.

ANNA HATHEWAY.

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 139. note 4.

Richard Hathaway, a substantial yeoman, residing at Shottery, a village about a mile distant from Stratford. It appears also from the tomb-stone of his mistress \* in the church of Stratford, that she must have been born in 1556, and was therefore eight years older than himself.

Of the family of the Hathaways little now, except the record of a few deaths and baptisms, can be ascertained with precision: in the register-books of the parish of Stratford, the following entry, in all probability, refers to the father of the poet's wife: —

“Johanna, daughter of *Richard Hathaway*, otherwise Gardiner, of Shottery, was baptized May 9, 1566.” †

As the register does not commence before 1558, the baptism of *Anne* could not of course be included; but it appears that the family of this Richard was pretty numerous, for Thomas his son was baptized at Stratford, April 12. 1569; John, another son, Feb. 3. 1574; and William, another son, Nov. 30. 1578. ‡ Thomas died at Stratford in 1654-5, at the advanced age of eighty-five. § That the Hathaways have continued resident at Shottery and the neighbourhood, down to the present age, will be evident from the note below, which records their deaths to the year 1785, as inscribed on the floor, in the nave and aisle of Stratford church. ||

\* “Heere Lyeth Interred The Bodye of Anne, Wife of Mr. William Shakespeare, Who Depted. This Life The 6th Day of Avgvst, 1623, Being of The Age of 67 Yeares.” — Wheler's *Stratford*, p. 76.

† Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 133.

‡ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 134. Note by Malone.

§ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 128.

|| “Richard Hathaway, of Shottery, died 15th April, 1692. Robert Hathaway died 4th March, 1728, aged 64. Edmund Hathaway died 14th June, 1729, aged 57. Jane his wife died 12th Dec. 1729, aged 64. John Hathaway died 11th Oct. 1731, aged 39. Abigail, wife of John Hathaway, jun. of Luddington, died 5th of May, 1735, aged 29. Mary her daughter died 13th July, 1735, aged 10 weeks. Robert Hathaway, son of Robert and Sarah Hathaway, died the 1st of March, 1723, aged 21. Ursula, wife of John Hathaway, died the 23d of Janry. 1731, aged 50. John Hathaway, sen. died the 5th of Sept. 1753, aged 73. John Hathaway, of Haddington, died the 23d of June, 1775, aged 67. S. H. 1756. S. H. 1785.” — Wheler's *History and Antiquities of Stratford-upon-Avon*, p. 55.



The cottage at Shottery, in which Anne and her parents dwelt, is said to be yet standing, and is still pointed out to strangers as a subject of curiosity. It is now impossible to substantiate the truth of the tradition; but Mr. Ireland, who has given a sketch of this cottage in his *Picturesque Views on the Avon*, observes, "it is still occupied by the descendants of her family, who are poor and numerous. To this same humble cottage I was referred when pursuing the same inquiry, by the late Mr. Harte, of Stratford, before-mentioned. He told me there was old oak chair, that had always in his remembrance been called Shakspeare's courting chair, with a purse that had been likewise his, and handed down from him to his grand-daughter Lady Bernard, and from her through the Hathaway family to those of the present day. From the best information I was able to collect at the time, I was induced to consider this account as authentic, and from a wish to obtain the smallest trifle appertaining to our Shakspeare, I became a purchaser of these relics. Of the chair I have here given a sketch: it is of a date sufficiently ancient to justify the credibility of its history; and as to farther proof, it must rest on the traditional opinion and the character of this poor family. The purse is about four inches square, and is curiously wrought with small black and white bugles and beads; the tassels are of the same materials. The bed and other furniture in the room where the chair stood, have the appearance of so high antiquity, as to leave no doubt but that they might all have been the furniture of this house long before the time of Shakspeare.

"The proprietor of this furniture, an old woman upwards of seventy, had slept in the bed from her childhood, and was always told it had been there since the house was built. Her absolute refusal to part with this bed at any price was one of the circumstances which led to a persuasion that I had not listened with too easy credulity to the tale she told me respecting the articles I had purchased. By the same person I was informed, that at the time of the Jubilee, the late George Garrick obtained from her a small inkstand, and a pair of fringed gloves, said to have been worn by Shakspeare."\*

\* Ireland's Views, p. 206—209.



Of the personal charms of the poet's mistress nothing has been transmitted to us by which we can form the smallest estimate, nor can we positively ascertain whether convenience, or the attraction of a beautiful form, was the chief promoter of this early connection. Mr. Rowe merely observes, that, "in order to settle in the world after a family-manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very \* young;" language which seems to imply that *prudence* was the prime motive with the youthful bard. Theobald proceeds still further, and declares "it is *probable*, a view of *interest* might partly sway his conduct in this point: for he married the daughter of a *substantial* yeoman in his neighbourhood, and *she had the start of him in age no less than eight years.*"† Capell, on the contrary, thinks that the marriage was contracted against the wishes of his father, whose displeasure was the consequence of their union.‡

A moment's consideration of the character of Shakspeare will induce us to conclude that *interest* could not be his *leading* object in forming the matrimonial tie. In no stage of his subsequent life does a motive of this kind appear strongly to have influenced him; and it is well known, from facts which we shall have occasion shortly to record, that his juvenility at Stratford was marked, rather by carelessness and dissipation, than by the cool calculations of pecuniary wisdom. In short, to adopt, with slight variation, a line of his own, we may confidently assert that at this period,

"Love and Liberty crept in the mind and marrow of his youth."

*Timon of Athens.*

Neither can we agree with Mr. Capell in supposing that the father of our bard was averse to the connection; a supposition which he has built on the idea of old Mr. Shakspeare being "a man of no little substance," and that by this marriage of his son he was disappointed in a design which he had formed of sending him to an § University! Now it has been proved that John Shakspeare was, at this period, if not in distressed yet in embarrassed circumstances, and that neither

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 60.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 193.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 355, note 1.

§ Ibid.



the school-education of his son, nor his subsequent employment at home, could be such as was calculated in any degree to prepare him for an academical life.

We conclude, therefore, and certainly, with every probability on our side, that the young poet's attachment to Anne Hathaway was, not only perfectly disinterested, but had met likewise with the approbation of his parents. This will appear with more verisimilitude if we consider, in the first place, that though his bride were eight years older than himself, still she could be but in her twenty-sixth year, an age compatible with youth, and with the most alluring beauty ; secondly, it does not appear that the finances of young Shakspeare were in the least improved by the connection ; and thirdly, we know that he remained some years at Stratford after his marriage, which it is not likely that he would have done, had he been at variance with his father.

It is to be regretted, and it is indeed somewhat extraordinary, that not a fragment of the bard's poetry, addressed to his Warwickshire beauty, has been rescued from oblivion ; for that the muse of Shakspeare did not lie dormant on an occasion so propitious to her inspiration we must believe, both from the costume of the times, and from his own amatory disposition. He has himself told us that

“ Never durst poet touch a pen to write,  
Until his ink were temper'd with love's sighs.”—

*Love's Labour's Lost*, act iv. sc. 3.

and we have seen that an opportunity for qualification was very early placed within his power. That he availed himself of it, there can be no doubt ; and had his effusions, on this occasion, descended to posterity, we should, in all probability, have been made acquainted with several interesting particulars relative to his early life and character, and to the person and disposition of his mistress. \*

\* Building on the high credibility of Shakspeare having employed his poetical talents, at this period, on the subject nearest to his heart, two ingenious gentlemen have been so obliging as not only to furnish him with words on this occasion, but to offer these to the

Our ignorance on this subject, however, would have been compensated, had any authentic documents been preserved relative to his establishment at Stratford, in consequence of his marriage; but of his domestic arrangements, of his business or professional employment, no information, or tradition to be depended upon, has reached us. We can only infer, from the evidence produced in the preceding chapter, and from the necessity, which must now have occurred, of providing for a family-establishment, that if, as we have reason to conclude, he had entered on the exercise of a branch of the manorial law, previous to his marriage, and with a view towards that event, he would, of course, be compelled, from prudential motives, to continue that occupation, after he had become a householder, and most probably to combine with it the business of a woolstapler, either on his own separate interest, or in concert with his father.

If any further incitement were wanting to his industry, it was soon imparted; for, to the claims upon him as a husband, were added, during the following year, those which attach to the name of a parent; his eldest child, Susanna, being born in May 1583, and baptized on the 26th of the same month. Thus, scarcely had our poet completed his nineteenth year, when the most serious duties of life were imperiously forced upon his attention, under circumstances perhaps of narrow fortune not altogether calculated to render their performance easy and pleasant; a situation which, on a superficial view, would not appear adapted to afford that leisure, that free and unincumbered state of intellect, so necessary to mental exertion; but with Shakspeare the pressure of these and of pecuniary difficulties served only to awaken that energy and elasticity of mind, which, ultimately directing his talents into their proper channel, called forth the brightest and most successful emanations of a genius nearly universal.

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world as the genuine product of his genius. It is scarcely necessary to add, that I allude to the Shakspeare Papers of young Ireland; and to a Tour in Quest of Genealogy, by a Barrister.



The family of the youthful bard gathered round him with rapidity; for, in 1584-5, it was increased by the birth of twins, a son and daughter, named Hamnet and Judith, who were baptized on February the 2d, of the same year.

The boy was christened by the name of Hamnet in compliment to his god-father Mr. Hamnet Sadler, and the girl was called Judith, from a similar deference to his wife, Mrs. Judith Sadler, who acted as her sponsor. Mr. Hamnet or Hamlet Sadler, for they were considered as synonymous names, and therefore used indiscriminately \*, appears to have been some relation of the Shakspeare family; he is one of the witnesses to Shakspeare's will, and is remembered in it in the following manner:—" *Item*, I give and bequeath to Hamlet Sadler twenty-six shillings eight-pence, to buy him a ring." Mr. Sadler died at Stratford in October 1624, and is supposed to have been born about the year 1550. His wife was buried there March 23. 1613-14, and Mr. Malone conjectures that our poet was probably god-father to their son *William*, who was baptized at Stratford, February 5. 1597-8. † In the Stratford Register are to be found entries of the baptism of six of Mr. Sadler's children, four sons and two daughters, William being the last but one.

An anecdote of Shakspeare, unappropriated to any particular period of his life, and which may with as much, if not more, probability, be ascribed to this stage of his biography, as to any subsequent era, has been preserved as a tradition at Stratford. A drunken blacksmith, with a carbuncled face, reeling up to Shakspeare, as he was leaning over a mercer's door, exclaimed, with much vociferation,

" Now, Mr. SHAKSPEARE, tell me, if you can,  
The difference between a youth and a young man:"

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\* Thus in the will of Shakspeare we read, " I give and bequeath to *Hamlet* Sadler;" when at the close, Mr. Sadler as a witness writes his christian name *Hamnet*. See Malone's note on this subject, Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 135.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 158, note 1.

a question which immediately drew from our poet the following reply :

“ Thou son of fire, with *thy face like à maple*,  
The same difference as between a scalded and a coddled apple.”

A part of the wit of this anecdote, which, says Mr. Malone, “ was related near fifty years ago to a gentleman at Stratford, by a person then above eighty years of age, whose father might have been contemporary with Shakspeare,” turns upon the comparison between the blacksmith’s face and a species of maple, the bark of which, according to Evelyn, is uncommonly rough, and the grain undulated and crisped into a variety of curls.

It would appear, indeed, from a book published in 1611, under the title of *Tarleton’s Jeasts*, that this fancied resemblance was a frequent source of sarcastic wit ; for it is there recorded of this once celebrated comedian, that, “as he was performing some part ‘ at the Bull in Bishopsgate-street, where the Queen’s players oftentimes played,’ while he was ‘ kneeling down to aske his father’s blessing,’ a fellow in the gallery threw an apple at him, which hit him on the cheek. He immediately took up the apple, and, advancing to the audience, addressed them in these lines :

‘ Gentlemen, this fellow, with *his face of mapple*,  
Instead of a pippin hath throwne me an apple ;  
But as for an apple he hath cast a crab,  
So instead of an honest woman God hath sent him a drab.’

‘ The people,’ says the relator, ‘ laughed heartily ; for the fellow had a quean to his wife.’ ” \*

Shakspeare was now, to all appearance, settled in the country ; he was carrying on his own and his father’s business ; he was married and had a family around him ; a situation in which the comforts of domestic privacy might be predicted within his reach, but which augured little of that splendid destiny, that universal fame and unparalleled celebrity, which awaited his future career.

\* Malone’s Historical Account of the English Stage, Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 140. note 4.



In adherence, therefore, to the plan, which we have announced, of connecting the circumstances of the times with our author's life, we have chosen this period of it, as admirably adapted for the introduction of a survey of country life and manners, its customs, diversions and superstitions, as they existed in the age of Shakspeare. These, therefore, will be the subject of the immediately following chapters, in which it shall be our particular aim, among the numerous authorities to which we shall be obliged to have recourse, to draw from the poet himself those passages which throw light upon the topics as they rise to view ; an arrangement which, when it shall have been carried, in all its various branches, through the work, will clearly show, that from Shakspeare, more than from any other poet, is to be collected the history of the times in which he lived, so far as that history relates to popular usage and amusement.

## CHAPTER V.

A VIEW OF COUNTRY LIFE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE;—ITS MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.  
— RURAL CHARACTERS.

It may be necessary, in the commencement of this chapter, to remark, that rural life, in the strict acceptation of the term, will be at present the exclusive object of attention; a survey of the manners and customs of the metropolis, and of the superior orders of society, being deferred to a subsequent portion of the work.

No higher character will, therefore, be introduced in this sketch than the *country squire*, constituting according to Harrison, who wrote about the year 1580, one of the second order of gentlemen; for these, he remarks, “be divided into two sorts, as the baronie or estate of lords (which conteineth barons and all above that degree), and also those that be no lords, as knights, esquires, and simple gentlemen.”\* He has also furnished us, in another place, with a more precise definition of the character under consideration. “Esquire (which we call commonlie squire) is a French word, and so much in Latine as Scutiger vel Armiger, and such are all those which beare armes, or armoires, testimonies of their race from whence they be descended. They were at the first costerels or bearers of the armes of barons, or knights, and thereby being instructed in martiall knowledge, had that name for a dignitie given to distinguish them from common souldiers called Gregarii Milities when they were together in the field.”†

It is curious to mark the minute distinctions of gentlemen as detailed at this period, in the various books of *Armorie* or *Heraldrie*. The science, indeed, was cultivated, in the days of Shakspeare, with an enthusiasm which has never since been equalled, and the treatises on the subject were consequently multitudinous.

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, edit. of 1807, in six vol. 4to. vol. i. p. 276.

† Holinshed, vol. i. p. 273.



“ ——— If no gentleman, why then no arms,” \*

exclaims our poet; the aspirants, therefore, to this distinction were numerous, and in the *Gentleman's Academie*; or, *The Booke of St. Albans*, published by Gervase Markham in 1595, which he says in the dedication was *then* absolutely “necessarie and behovefull to the accomplishment of the gentlemen of this flourishing ile — in the heroicall and excellent study of Armory,” we find “nine sortes” and “fourer maner” of gentlemen expressly distinguished.

“ Of nine sortes of gentlemen :

“ First, there is a gentleman of ancestry and blood.

“ A gentleman of blood.

“ A gentleman of coat-armour, and those are three, one of the kings badge, another of lordship, and the third of killing a pagan.

“ A gentleman untriall: a gentleman Ipocrafet: a gentleman spirituall and temporall: there is also a gentleman spirituall and temporall. —

“ The divers manner of gentlemen :

“ There are fourer maner of gentlemen, to wit, one of auncestrie, which must needes bee of blood, and three of coate-armour, and not of blood: as one a gentleman of coate-armour of the kings badge, which is of armes given him by an herauld: another is, to whome the king giveth a lordeshippe, to a yeoman by his letters pattents, and to his heires for ever, whereby hee may beare the coate-armour of the same lordeshippe: the thirde is, if a yeoman kill a gentleman, Pagan or Sarazen, whereby he may of right weare his coate-armour: and some holde opinion, that if one christian doe kill an other, and if it be lawfull battell, they may weare each others coate-armour, yet it is not so good as where the christian killes the Pagan.”

We have also the virtues and vices proper or contrary to the character of the gentleman, the former of which are divided into five amorous and four sovereign: “ the five amorous are these, — lordly of

\* Taming of the Shrew, act ii. sc. 1.

countenance, sweet in speech, wise in answer, perfitte in government and cherefull to faithfulness: the foure soveraigne are these fewe,—oathes are no swearing, patient in affliction, knowledge of his owne birth, and to feare to offend his soveraigne.”\* The vices which are likewise enumerated as *nine*, are all modifications of cowardice, lechery, and drunkenness.

\* Of the very rare tract from which these extracts are taken, the following is the entire title-page: — “The Gentleman’s Academie; or, the Booke of St. Albans: containing three most exact and excellent Bookes: the first of Hawking, the second of all the proper Termes of Hunting, and the last of Armorie: all compiled by Juliana Barnes, in the Yere from the Incarnation of Christ 1486. And now reduced into a better method, by G. M. London. Printed for Humphrey Lownes, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, 1595.” This curious edition of the *Booke of St. Albans*, accommodated to the days of Shakspeare, contains 95 leaves 4to. and I shall add the interesting dedication:

“To the Gentlemen of England:  
and all good fellowship  
of Huntsmen and  
Falconers.

“Gentlemen, this booke, intreating of Hawking, Hunting, and Armorie; the originall copie of the which was doone at St. Albans, about what time the excellent arte of printing was first brought out of Germany, and practised here in England: which booke, because of the antiquitie of the same, and the things therein contained, being so necessarie and behovefull to the accomplishment of the gentlemen of this flourishing ile, and others which take delight in either of these noble sports, or in that heroicall and excellent study of Armory, I have revivd and brought again to light the same which was almost altogether forgotten, and either few or none of the perfect copies thereof remaining, except in their hands, who wel knowing the excellency of the worke, and the rarenesse of the booke, smothered the same from the world, thereby to inrich themselves in private with the knowledge of these delights. Therefore I humbly crave pardon of the precise and judicial reader, if sometimes I use the words of the ancient authour, in such plaine and homely English, as that time afforded, not being so regardful, nor tying myself so strictly to deliver any thing in the proper and peculiar wordes and termes of arte, which for the love I beare to antiquitie, and to the honest simplicitie of those former times, I observe as wel beseeing the subject, and no whit disgracefull to the worke, our tong being not of such puritie then, as at this day the poets of our age have raised it to: of whom, and in whose behalf I wil say thus much, that our nation may only thinke herself beholding for the glory and exact compendiousnes of our language. Thus submitting our academy to your kind censures and friendly acceptance of the same, and requesting you to reade with indifferency, and correct with judgement; I commit you to God.

G. M.”



That the character of the gentleman was still estimated, in the reign of Elizabeth, according to this definition of the Prioress of Sopewell,

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From this dedication we learn that the original edition of the Booke of St. Albans was as scarce towards the close of the sixteenth century as at the present day; that "few or none of the perfect copies" were to be obtained; for that those were in the hands of *Bibliomaniacs* who (like too many now existing) "smother'd them from the world." We have, therefore, every reason to conclude, from "the rarenesse (and consequent value) of the booke" of 1486, that the copy of Juliana's work in the library of Shakspeare, was the edition by Markham of 1595. I shall just add, that the copy now before me, was purchased at the Roxburgh sale, for 9*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.*! It is, notwithstanding, probable, from the *peculiarities* attending Markham's re-impression, that this sum, great as it may appear, will be exceeded at some future sale.

The attachment of *Gervase Markham* to the subjects which employed the pen of his favourite Prioress, is very happily introduced by Mr. Dibdin, while alluding to the similar propensities of the *modern Markham*, Mr. Haslewood. "Up starts FLORIZEL, and blows his bugle, at the annunciation of any work, new or old, upon the diversions of *Hawking, Hunting, or Fishing!* Carry him through CAMILLO's cabinet of Dutch pictures, and you will see how instinctively, as it were, his eyes are fixed upon a sporting piece by Wouvermans. The hooded hawk, in his estimation, hath more charms than Guido's Madonna: — how he envies every rider upon his white horse! — how he burns to bestride the foremost steed, and to mingle in the fair throng, who turn their blue eyes to the scarcely bluer expanse of heaven! Here he recognises *Gervase Markham*, spurring his courser; and there he fancies himself lifting *Dame Juliana* from her horse! Happy deception! dear fiction! says Florizel — while he throws his eyes in an opposite direction, and views every printed book upon the subject, from *Barnes to Thornton.*" *Bibliomania*, p. 729, 730.

The following very amusing description of "the difference twixt Churles and Gentlemen," will prove an adequate specimen of Markham's edition, will be appropriate to the subject in the text, and may be compared with the accurate reprint of the edition of W. De Worde by Mr. Haslewood.

"There was never gentleman, nor churle ordained, but hee had father and mother: Adam and Eve had neither father nor mother, and therefore in the sonnes of Adam and Eve, first issued out both gentleman and churle. By the sonnes of Adam and Eve, to wit, Seth, Abell, and Caine, was the royall blood divided from the rude and barbarous, a brother to murder his brother contrary to the law, what could be more ungentlemanly or vile? in that, therefore, became Caine and al his ofspring churles, both by the curse of God, and his owne father. Seth was made a gentleman through his father and mother's blessing, from whose loynes issued Noah, a gentleman by kind and linage. Noah had three sonnes truely begotten, two by the mother, named Cham and Sem, and the third by the father called Japhet, even in these three, after the world's inundation, was both gentlenes and vilenes discerned, in Cham was grose barbarisme founde towards his owne father in discovering his privities, and deriding from whence hee proceeded. Japhet the yongest gentlemanlike reproved his brother, which was to him reputed a vertue, where



we have consequently the authority of Markham to assert, who tells us, that the study of his modernised edition of the Booke of St. Albans was still "behovefull to the accomplishment of the gentleman" of 1595.

The mansion-houses of the country-gentlemen were, in the days of Shakspeare, rapidly improving both in their external appearance, and in their interior comforts. During the reign of Henry the Eighth, and even of Mary, they were, if we except their size, little better than cottages, being thatched buildings, covered on the outside with the coarsest clay, and lighted only by lattices; when Harrison wrote, in the age of Elizabeth, though the greater number of manor-houses still remained framed of timber, yet he observes, "such as be latelie builded, are cōmonlie either of bricke or hard stone, or both; their roomes large and comelie, and houses of office further distant from their lodgings." \* The old timber mansions, too, were now covered with the finest plaster, which, says the historian, "beside the delectable

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Cham for his abortive vilenes became a churle both through the curse of God and his father Noah. When Noah awoke, hee said to Cham his sonne knowest not thou how it is become of Caine the sonne of Adam, and of his churlelike blood, that for them all the worlde is drowned save eight persons, and wilt thou nowe begin barbarisme againe, whereby the world in after ages shall be brought to consummation? well upon thee it shall bee and so I pray the Great one it maye fall out, for to thee I give my curse, and withall the north part of the world, to draw thine habitation unto, for there shall it be where sorrow, care, colde, and as a mischievous and unrespected churle thou shalt live, which part of the earth shall be termed Europe, which is the country of churles. Japhet come hither my sonne, on thee will I raine my blessing, deare insteede of Seth: Adams sonne, I make thee a gentleman, and thy renowne shall stretch through the west part of the world, and to the end of the occident, where wealth and grace shall flourish, there shall be thine habitation, and thy dominion shall bee called Asia, which is the cuntrie of gentlemen. And Sem my sonne, I make thee a gentleman also, to multiply the blood of Abell slaine so undeservedlie, to thee I give the orient, that part of the world which shall be called Africa, which is the country of temperateres: and thus divided Noah the world and his blessings. From the of-spring of gentlemanly Japhet came Abraham, Moyses, Aaron and the Prophets, and also the king of the right line of Mary, of whom that only absolute gentleman Jesus was borne, perfite God and perfite man, according to his manhood king of the lande of Juda and the Jewes, and gentleman by his mother Mary princesse of coat armor." Fol. 44.

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 316.



whitenesse of the stuffe itselfe, is laied on so even and smoothlie, as nothing in my judgment can be done with more exactnesse \* :” and at the same time, the windows, interior decorations, and furniture were becoming greatly more useful and elegant. “ Of old time our countrie houses,” continues Harrison, “ instead of glasse did use much lattise, and that made either of wicker or fine rifts of oke in chekerwise. I read also that some of the better sort, in and before the time of the Saxons, did make panels of horne instead of glasse, and fix them in wooden calmes. But as horne in windows is now quite laid downe in everie place, so our lattises are also growne into lesse use, because glasse is come to be so plentifull, and within a verie little so good cheape if not better then the other. — The wals of our houses on the inner sides in like sort be either hanged with tapisterie, arras worke, or painted cloths, wherein either diverse histories, or hearbes, beasts, knots, and such like are stained, or else they are seeled with oke of our owne, or wainescot brought hither out of the east countries, whereby the roomes are not a little commanded, made warme, and much more close than otherwise they would be. As for stooves we have not hitherto used them greatlie, yet doo they now begin to be made in diverse houses of the gentry. — Likewise in the houses of knights, gentlemen, &c. it is not geson to behold generallie their great provision of Turkie worke, pewter, brasse, fine linen, and thereto costlie cupbords of plate, worth five or six hundred or a thousand pounds, to be deemed by estimation.” †

The house of every country-gentleman of property included a neat chapel and a spacious hall ; and where the estate and establishment were considerable, the mansion was divided into two parts or sides, one for the state or banqueting-rooms, and the other for the household ; but in general, the latter, except in baronial residences, was the only part to be met with, and when complete had the addition of parlours ; thus Bacon, in his *Essay on Building*, describing the houshold side of a mansion, says, “ I wish it divided at the first into a hall, and

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 315. † Holinshed, vol. i. p. 315. 317.



a chappell, with a partition betweene; both of good state and big-nesse: and those not to goe all the length, but to have, at the further end, a winter, and a summer parler, both faire: and under these roomes a faire and large cellar, sunke under ground: and likewise, some privie kitchins, with butteries and pantries, and the like.”\* It was the custom also to have windows opening from the parlours and passages into the chapel, hall, and kitchen, with the view of overlooking or controlling what might be going on; a trait of vigilant caution, which may still be discovered in some of our ancient colleges and manor-houses, and to which Shakspeare alludes in King Henry the Eighth, where he describes His Majesty and Butts the physician entering at a window above, which overlooks the council-chamber.† We may add, in illustration of this system of architectural espionage, that Andrew Borde, when giving instructions for building a house in his *Dictarie of Health*, directs “many of the chambers to have a view into the chapel:” and that Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter, dated 1573, says, “if it please Her Majestie, she may come in through my gallerie, and see the disposition of the hall in dynner-time, at a window opening thereunto.”‡

The hall of the country-squire was the usual scene of eating and hospitality, at the upper end of which was placed the orsille or high table, a little elevated above the floor, and here the master of the mansion presided, with an authority, if not a state, which almost equalled that of the potent baron. The table was divided into upper and lower messes, by a huge saltcellar, and the rank and consequence of the visitors were marked by the situation of their seats above, and below, the saltcellar; a custom which not only distinguished the relative dignity of the guests, but extended likewise to the nature of the provision, the wine frequently circulating only above the saltcellar, and the dishes below it, being of a coarser kind than those near the head of the table. So prevalent was this uncourteous distinction, that

\* Bacon's *Essayes or Counsels*, 4to. edit., 1632, p. 260.

† Act v. sc. 2.

‡ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xv. p. 184. note 5. by Steevens.



Shakspeare, in his *Winter's Tale*, written about the year 1604, or 1610, designates the inferior orders of society by the term "*lower messes*."

————— " Lower messes,  
Perchance, are to this business purblind." \*

Dekkar, likewise, in his play called *The Honest Whore*, 1604, mentions in strong terms the degradation of sitting beneath the salt: " Plague him, set him beneath the salt; and let him not touch a bit, till every one has had his full cut." † Hall too, in the sixth satire of his second book, published in 1597, when depicting the humiliated state of the squire's chaplain, says, that he must not

" ever presume to sit *above the salt*:"

and Jonson, in his *Cynthia's Revells*, speaking of a coxcomb, says, " his fashion is, not to take knowledge of him that is beneath him in clothes. He never drinks *below the salt*." See act i. sc. 2.

This invidious regulation appears to have extended far into the seventeenth century; for Massinger in his *City Madam*, acted in 1632, thus notices it:

————— " My proud lady  
Admits him to her table, marry, ever  
*Beneath the salt*, and there he sits the subject  
Of her contempt and scorn:" ‡

and Cartright still later:

————— " Where you are best esteem'd,  
You only pass under the favourable name  
Of humble cousins that sit *beneath the salt*." *Love's Convert*.

The luxury of eating and of good cooking were well understood in the days of Elizabeth, and the table of the country-squire frequently groaned beneath the burden of its dishes; at Christmas and

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 236.

† Ancient British Drama, vol. i. p. 531.

‡ Massinger's Plays, *apud* Gifford, vol. iv. p. 7.

at Easter especially, the hall became the scene of great festivity; "in gentlemen's houses, at Christmas," says Aubrey, "the first dish that was brought to table was a boar's head, with a lemon in his mouth. At Queen's Coll. Oxon. they still retain this custom, the bearer of it bringing it into the hall, singing to an old tune an old Latin rhyme, *Apri caput defero*, &c. The first dish that was brought up to table on Easter-day was a red-herring riding away on horseback; i. e. a herring ordered by the cook something after the likeness of a man on horseback, set in a corn sallad. The custom of eating a gammon of bacon at Easter (which is still kept up in many parts of England) was founded on this, viz. to shew their abhorrence of Judaism at that solemn commemoration of our Lord's resurrection." \*

Games and diversions of various kinds, such as mumming, masquing, dancing, loaf-stealing, &c. &c. were allowed in the hall on these days; and the servants, or heralds, wore the coats of arms of their masters, and cried '*Largesse*' thrice. The hall was usually hung round with the insignia of the squire's amusements, such as hunting, shooting, fishing, &c.; but in case he were a justice of the peace, it assumed a more terrific aspect. "The halls of the justice of peace," observes honest Aubrey, "were dreadful to behold. The skreen was garnished with corslets and helmets, gaping with open mouths, with coats of mail, launces, pikes, halberts, brown bills, bucklers." †

The following admirable description of an old English hall, which still remains as it existed in the days of Elizabeth, is taken from the notes to Mr. Scott's recent poem of Rokeby, and was communicated to the bard by a friend; the story which it introduces, I have also added, as it likewise occurred in the same reign, and affords a curious though not a pleasing trait of the manners of the times; as, while it gives a dreadful instance of ferocity, it shows with what ease justice, even in the case of the most enormous crimes, might be set aside.

\* From a MS. of Aubrey's in the Ashmole Museum, as quoted by Mr. Malcolm in his *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London*, part i. p. 220. 4to.

† Aubrey's MS. Malcolm, p. 221, 222.



Littlecote-House stands in a low and lonely situation. On three sides it is surrounded by a park that spreads over the adjoining hill; on the fourth, by meadows which are watered by the river Kennet. Close on one side of the house is a thick grove of lofty trees, along the verge of which runs one of the principal avenues to it through the park. It is an irregular building of great antiquity, and was probably erected about the time of the termination of feudal warfare, when defence came no longer to be an object in a country-mansion. Many circumstances in the interior of the house, however, seem appropriate to feudal times. The hall is very spacious, floored with stones, and lighted by large transom windows, that are clothed with casements. Its walls are hung with old military accoutrements, that have long been left a prey to rust. At one end of the hall is a range of coats of mail and helmets, and there is on every side abundance of old-fashioned pistols and guns, many of them with matchlocks. Immediately below the cornice hangs a row of leathern jerkins, made in the form of a shirt, supposed to have been worn as armour by the vassals. A large oak-table, reaching nearly from one end of the room to the other, might have feasted the whole neighbourhood, and an appendage to one end of it made it answer at other times for the old game of shuffle-board. The rest of the furniture is in a suitable style, particularly an arm-chair of cumbrous workmanship, constructed of wood, curiously turned, with a high back and triangular seat, said to have been used by Judge Popham in the reign of Elizabeth. The entrance into the hall is at one end by a low door, communicating with a passage that leads from the outer door, in the front of the house, to a quadrangle within; at the other it opens upon a gloomy staircase, by which you ascend to the first floor, and, passing the doors of some bed-chambers, enter a narrow gallery, which extends along the back front of the house from one end to the other of it, and looks upon an old garden. This gallery is hung with portraits, chiefly in the Spanish dresses of the sixteenth century. In one of the bed-chambers, which you pass in going towards the gallery, is a bedstead with blue furniture, which time has now made dingy and threadbare,



and in the bottom of one of the bed-curtains you are shewn a place where a small piece has been cut out and sown in again ; a circumstance which serves to identify the scene of the following story :

“ It was a dark rainy night in the month of November, that an old midwife sate musing by her cottage fire-side, when on a sudden she was startled by a loud knocking at the door. On opening it she found a horseman, who told her that her assistance was required immediately by a person of rank, and that she should be handsomely rewarded, but that there were reasons for keeping the affair a strict secret, and, therefore, she must submit to be blind-folded, and to be conducted in that condition to the bed-chamber of the lady. After proceeding in silence for many miles through rough and dirty lanes, they stopped, and the midwife was led into a house, which, from the length of her walk through the apartment, as well as the sounds about her, she discovered to be the seat of wealth and power. When the bandage was removed from her eyes, she found herself in a bed-chamber, in which were the lady on whose account she had been sent for, and a man of a haughty and ferocious aspect. The lady was delivered of a fine boy. Immediately the man commanded the midwife to give him the child, and, catching it from her, he hurried across the room, and threw it on the back of the fire, that was blazing in the chimney. The child, however, was strong, and by its struggles rolled itself off upon the hearth, when the ruffian again seized it with fury, and, in spite of the intercession of the midwife, and the more piteous entreaties of the mother, thrust it under the grate, and raking the live coals upon it, soon put an end to its life. The midwife, after spending some time in affording all the relief in her power to the wretched mother, was told that she must be gone. Her former conductor appeared, who again bound her eyes, and conveyed her behind him to her own home ; he then paid her handsomely, and departed. The midwife was strongly agitated by the horrors of the preceding night ; and she immediately made a deposition of the fact before a magistrate. Two circumstances afforded hopes of detecting the house in which the crime had been committed ; one was, that the midwife, as



she sate by the bed-side, had, with a view to discover the place, cut out a piece of the bed-curtain, and sown it in again; the other was, that as she had descended the staircase, she had counted the steps. Some suspicions fell upon one Darrell, at that time the proprietor of Littlecote-House and the domain around it. The house was examined, and identified by the midwife, and Darrell was tried at Salisbury for the murder. By corrupting his judge, he escaped the sentence of the law; but broke his neck by a fall from his horse in hunting, in a few months after. The place where this happened is still known by the name of Darrell's Hill: a spot to be dreaded by the peasant whom the shades of evening have overtaken on his way.

"Littlecote-House is two miles from Hungerford, in Berkshire, through which the Bath road passes. The fact occurred in the reign of Elizabeth. All the important circumstances I have given exactly as they are told in the country." Rokeby, 4to. edit. notes, p.102—106.

The usual fare of country-gentlemen, relates Harrison, was "four, five, or six dishes, when they have but *small resort*;" and accordingly, we find that Justice Shallow, when he invites Falstaffe to dinner, issues the following orders: "Some pigeons, Davy; a couple of short-legged hens; a joint of mutton; and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William Cook."\* But on feast-days, and particularly on the festivals above-mentioned, the profusion and cost of the table were astonishing. Harrison observes that the country-gentlemen and merchants contemned butchers meat on such occasions, and vied with the nobility in the production of rare and delicate viands, of which he gives a long list†; and Massinger says,

"Men may talk of *country-christmasses* —  
Their thirty-pound butter'd eggs, their pies of carps tongues,

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\* Henry IV. part ii. act v. sc. 1.

† Holinshed, vol. i. p. 281. The particulars of the diet of our ancestors in the age of Shakspeare will be given in a subsequent part of the work.

Their pheasants drench'd with ambergris, the carcasses  
 Of three fat wethers bruised for gravy, to  
 Make sauce for a single peacock; yet their feasts  
 Were fasts, compared with the city's." \*

It was the custom in the houses of the country-gentlemen to retire after dinner, which generally took place about eleven in the morning, to the garden-bower or an arbour in the orchard, in order to partake of the banquet or dessert; thus Shallow, addressing Falstaffe after dinner, exclaims, "Nay, you shall see mine orchard: where, in an *arbour*, we will eat a last year's pippin of my own grafting, with a dish of carraways, and so forth." † From the banquet it was usual to retire to evening prayer, and thence to supper, between five and six o'clock; for in Shakspeare's time, there were seldom more than two meals, dinner and supper; "heretofore," remarks Harrison, "there hath beene much more time spent in eating and drinking than commonlie is in these daies, for whereas of old we had breakfasts in the forenoone, beverages, or nuntions after dinner, and thereto reare sup-

\* City Madam, act ii. sc. 1.

Gervase Markham in his *English House-Wife*, the first edition of which was published not long after Shakspeare's death, after mentioning in his second chapter, which treats of cookery, the manner of "ordering great feasts," closes his observations under this head, with directions for "a more humble feast, or an ordinary proportion which any good man may keep in his family, for the entertainment of his true and worthy friend;" this *humble feast or ordinary proportion*, he proceeds to say, should consist for the first course of "sixteen full dishes, that is, dishes of meat that are of substance, and not empty, or for shew — as thus, for example; first, a shield of brawn with mustard; secondly, a boyl'd capon; thirdly, a boyl'd piece of beef; fourthly, a chine of beef roasted; fifthly, a neat's tongue roasted; sixthly, a pig roasted; seventhly, chewets bak'd; eighthly, a goose roasted; ninthly, a swan roasted; tenthly, a turkey roasted; the eleventh, a haunch of venison roasted; the twelfth, a pasty of venison; the thirteenth, a kid with a pudding in the belly; the fourteenth, an olive-pye; the fifteenth, a couple of capons; the sixteenth, a custard or dowsets. Now to these full dishes may be added sallets, fricases, quelque choses, and devised paste, as many dishes more which make the full service no less than two and thirty dishes, which is as much as can conveniently stand on one table, and in one mess; and after this manner you may proportion both your second and third course, holding fulness on one half of the dishes, and shew in the other, which will be both frugal in the spendor, contentment to the guest, and much pleasure and delight to the beholders." P. 100, 101. ninth edition of 1683, small 4to.

† Henry IV. part ii. act v. sc. 3.



pers generallie when it was time to go to rest. Now these od repasts, thanked be God, are verie well left, and ech one in manner (except here and there some yoong hungrie stomach that cannot fast till dinner time) contenteth himselfe with dinner and supper onelie. The nobilitie, *gentlemen*, and merchantmen, especially at great meetings, doo sit commonlie till two or three of the clocke at afternoone, so that with manie is an hard matter to rise from the table to go to evening praier, and returne from thence to come time enough to supper.”\*

The supper which, on days of festivity, was often protracted to a late hour, and often too as substantial as the dinner, was succeeded, especially at Christmas, by gambols of various sorts, and sometimes the squire and his family would mingle in the amusements, or retiring to the tapestried parlour, would leave the hall to the more boisterous mirth of their household; then would the BLIND HARPER, who sold his *FIT of mirth for a groat*, be introduced, either to provoke the dance, or to rouse their wonder by his minstrelsy; his “matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the tale of Sir Topas, the reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, Adam Bell, and Clymmé of the Clough, and such other old romances or historical rimes, made purposely for recreation of the common people at Christmasse dinners and brideales.”† Nor was the evening passed by the parlour fire-side dissimilar in its pleasures; the harp of history or romance was frequently made vocal by one of the party. “We ourselves,” says Puttenham, who wrote in 1589, “have written for pleasure a little brief romance, or historical ditty, in the English tong of the Isle of Great Britaine, in short and long meetres, and by breaches or divisions, to be more commodiously sung to the harpe in places of assembly, where the company shal be desirous to heare of old adventures, and valiaunces of noble knights in times past, as are those of King Authur and his Knights of the Round Table, Sir Bevy of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, and others like.”‡

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 287.

† Puttenham’s Art of English Poesie, p. 69, reprint of 1811.

‡ Ibid. p. 33.



The *posset* at bed-time, closed the joyous day, a custom to which Shakspeare has occasionally alluded ; thus Lady Macbeth says of the "surfeited grooms," "I have drugg'd their possets\*;" Mrs. Quickly tells Rugby, "Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire †;" and Page, cheering Falstaffe, exclaims, "Thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my ‡ house." Thomas Heywood also, a contemporary of Shakspeare, has particularly noticed this refection as occurring just before bed-time: "Thou shalt be welcome to beef and bacon, and perhaps a bag-pudding; and my daughter Nell shall pop a *posset* upon thee when thou goest to bed." §

In short, hospitality, a love of festivity, and an ardent attachment to the sports of the field, were prominent traits in the character of the country-gentleman in Shakspeare's days. The floor of his hall was commonly occupied by his greyhounds, and on his hand was usually to be found his favorite hawk. His conversation was very generally on the subject of his diversions; for as Master Stephen says, "Why you know, an'a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages now-a-dayes, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the *Greeke*, or the *Latine*." || Classical acquirements were, nevertheless, becoming daily more fashionable and familiar with the character which we are describing; but still an intimacy with heraldy, romance, and the chroniclers, constituted the chief literary wealth of the country-gentleman. In his dress he was plain, though occasionally costly; yet Harrison complains in 1580, that the gaudy trappings of the French were creeping even into the rural and mercantile world: "Neither was it merrier," says he, "with England, than when an Englishman was knowne abroad by his owne cloth, and contented himselfe at home with his fine carsie hosen, and a meane slop: his coat, gowne, and cloak of browne, blue, or puke, with some

\* Macbeth, act ii. sc. 2.

† Merry Wives of Windsor, act i. sc. 4.

‡ Merry Wives of Windsor, act v. sc. 5.

§ Heywood's Edward II. p. 1.

|| Jonson's Every Man in his Humour, act i. sc. 1. Acted in the year 1598.



pretie furniture of velvet or furre, and a doublet of sad tawnie, or blacke velvet, or other comelie silke, without such cuts and gawrish colours as are worne in these daies, and never brought in but by the consent of the French, who thinke themselves the gaiest men, when they have most diversities of jaggies and change of colours about them." \*

Of the female part of the family of the country-gentleman, we must be indulged in giving one description from Drayton, which not only particularizes the employments and dress of the younger part of the sex, but is written with the most exquisite simplicity and beauty; he is delineating the well-educated daughter of a country-knight:

" He had, as antique stories tell,  
A daughter cleaped Dawsabel,  
A maiden fair and free:  
And for she was her father's heir,  
Full well she was ycond the leir  
Of mickle courtesy.

The silk well couth she twist and twine,  
And make the fine march-pine,  
And with the needle work:  
And she couth help the priest to say  
His mattins on a holy day,  
And sing a psalm in kirk.

She wore a frock of frolic green,  
Might well become a maiden queen,  
Which seemly was to see;  
A hood to that so neat and fine,  
In colour like the columbine,  
Ywrought full featously.

Her features all as fresh above,  
As is the grass that grows by Dove,  
And lythe as lass of Kent.  
Her skin as soft as Lemster wool,  
As white as snow on Peakish Hull,  
Or swan that swims in Trent.

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 290.

This maiden in a morn betime,  
 Went forth when May was in the prime,  
 To get sweet setywall,  
 The honey-suckle, the harlock,  
 The lily, and the lady-smock,  
 To deck her summer-hall." \*

Some heightening to the picture of the country-gentleman which we have just given, may be drawn from the character of the upstart squire or country-knight, as it has been portrayed by Bishop Earle, towards the commencement of the seventeenth century ; for the absurd imitation of the one is but an overcharged or caricature exhibition of the costume of the other. The upstart country-gentleman, remarks the Bishop, " is a holiday clown, and differs only in the stuff of his clothes, not the stuff of himself, for he bare the kings sword before he had arms to wield it ; yet being once laid o'er the shoulder with a knighthood, he finds the herald his friend. His father was a man of good stock, though but a tanner or usurer ; he purchased the land, and his son the title. He has doffed off the name of a country-fellow, but the look not so easy, and his face still bears a relish of churne-milk. He is guarded with more gold lace than all the gentlemen of the country, yet his body makes his clothes still out of fashion. His house-keeping is seen much in the distinct families of dogs, and serving-men attendant on their kennels, and the deepness of their throats is the depth of his discourse. A hawk he esteems the true burden of nobility, and is exceeding ambitious to seem delighted in the sport, and have his fist gloved with his † jesses. A justice of peace he is to domineer in his parish, and do his neighbour wrong with more right. He will be drunk with his hunters for company, and stain his gentility with droppings of ale. He is fearful of being sheriff of the shire by instinct, and dreads the assize-week as much as the prisoner. In sum, he's but a clod of his own

\* Chalmers' Poets, vol. iv. p.435, 436. Drayton, Fourth Eclogue.

† " A term in hawking, signifying the short straps of leather which are fastened to the hawk's legs, by which he is held on the fist, or joined to the leash." Bliss.



earth, or his land is the dunghill and he the cock that crows over it : and commonly his race is quickly run, and his children's children, though they scape hanging, return to the place from whence they came. " \*

Notwithstanding the hospitality which generally prevailed among the country-gentlemen towards the close of the sixteenth century, the injurious custom of deserting their hereditary halls for the luxury and dissipation of the metropolis, began to appear ; and, accordingly, Bishop Hall has described in a most finished and picturesque manner the deserted mansion of his days ;

" Beat the broad gates, a goodly hollow sound  
With double echoes doth againe rebound ;  
But not a dog doth bark to welcome thee,  
Nor churlish porter canst thou chafing see :  
All dumb and silent, like the dead of night,  
Or dwelling of some sleepy Sybarite !  
The marble pavement hid with desert weed,  
With house-leek, thistle, dock, and hemlock-seed. —  
Look to the towered chimnies, which should be  
The wind-pipes of good hospitalitie : —  
Lo, there th'unthankful swallow takes her rest,  
And fills the tunnel with her circled nest." †

That it was no very uncommon thing for country-gentlemen to spend their Christmas in London at this period, is evident from a letter preserved by Mr. Lodge, in his *Illustrations of British History* ; it is written by William Fleetwood, afterwards Queen's Serjeant, to the Earl of Derby ; is dated New Yere's Daye, 1589, and contains the following passage :—" The gentlemen of Norff. and Suffolk were commanded to dep'te from London before Xtemmas, and to repaire to their countries, and there to kepe hospitalitie amongst their

\* Earle's *Microcosmography* ; or a Piece of the World discovered, in *Essays and Characters*. Edition of 1811, by Philip Bliss.

† Hall's *Satires*, book v. sat. 2. printed in 1598.



neighbours.\*” The fashion, however, of annually visiting the capital did not become general, nor did the character of the country-squire, such as it was in the days of Shakspeare, alter materially during the following century. †

\* Lodge’s *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, and James I.*, vol. ii. p. 383.

That this evil kept gradually increasing during the reign of James I., may be proved from the testimony of Peacham and Brathwait; the former, in his *Compleat Gentleman*, observes, — “ Much doe I detest that effeminacy of the most, that burne out day and night in their beds, and by the fire side; in trifles, gaming, or courting their yellow mistresses all the winter in a city; appearing but as cuckoes in the spring, one time in the yeare to the countrey and their tenants, leaving the care of keeping good houses at Christmas, to the honest yeomen of the countrey;” (p. 214.) and the latter, in his *English Gentleman*, addressing the rural fashionables of his day, exclaims, — “ Let your countrey (I say) enjoy you, who bred you, shewing there your hospitality, where God hath placed you, and with sufficient meanes blessed you. I doe not approve of these, who fly from their countrey, as if they were ashamed of her, or had committed something unworthy of her. How blame-worthy then are these *Court-comets*, whose onely delight is to admire themselves? These, no sooner have their bed-rid *fathers* betaken themselves to their last home, and removed from their crazie couch, but they are ready to sell a mannor for a coach. They will not take it as their fathers tooke it: their countrey houses must bee barred up, lest the poore passenger should expect what is impossible to finde, releefe to his want, or a supply to his necessity. No, the cage is opened, and all the birds are fled, not one crum of comfort remaining to succour a distressed poore one. Hospitality, which was once a *relique* of *gentry*, and a knowne *cognizance* to all ancient houses, hath lost her title, meerely through discontinuance: and *great houses*, which were at first founded to releev the poore, and such needfull passengers as travelled by them, are now of no use but onely as *waymarkes* to direct them. But whither are these *Great ones* gone? To the *Court*; there to spend in boundlesse and immoderate riot, what their provident ancestors had so long preserved, and at whose doores so many needy soules have beene comfortably releevd.” Second edition, 1633. p. 332.

In the margin of the page from which this extract is taken, occurs the following note:— “ This is excellently seconded by a Princely pen, in a pithy poem directed to all persons to ranke or quality to leave the Court, and returne into their owne countrey.”

† In confirmation of this remark, I shall beg leave to give, for the entertainment of my readers, the two following sketches of country-squires, as they existed towards the middle of the seventeenth, and commencement of the eighteenth century. “ Mr. Hastings,” relates Gilpin from Hutchin’s *History of Dorsetshire*, “ was low of stature, but strong and active, of a ruddy complexion with flaxen hair. His cloaths were always of green cloth, his house was of the old fashion; in the midst of a large park, well stocked with deer, rabbits, and fish-ponds. He had a long narrow bowling green in it; and used to play with round sand bowls. Here too he had a banquetting room built, like a stand, in a large tree. He kept all sorts of hounds, that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger:



The *country-clergyman*, the next character we shall attempt to notice, was distinguished, in the time of Shakspeare, by the appel-

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and had hawks of all kinds, both long and short winged. His great hall was commonly strewed with marrow bones; and full of hawk-perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers. The upper end of it was hung with fox-skins, of this and the last year's killing. Here and there a pole-cat was intermixed; and hunter's poles in great abundance. The parlour was a large room, compleatly furnished in the same style. On a broad hearth, paved with brick, lay some of the choicest terriers, hounds and spaniels. One or two of the great chairs had litters of cats in them, which were not to be disturbed. Of these, three or four always attended him at dinner, and a little white wand lay by his trencher, to defend it, if they were too troublesome. In the windows which were very large, lay his arrows, cross-bows, and other accoutrements. The corners of the room were filled with his best hunting and hawking poles. His oyster table stood at the lower end of the room, which was in constant use twice a day, all the year round; for he never failed to eat oysters both at dinner and supper; with which the neighbouring town of Pool supplied him. At the upper end of the room stood a small table with a double desk; one side of which held a CHURCH BIBLE; the other the BOOK OF MARTYRS. On different tables in the room lay hawk's-hoods, bells, old hats, with their crowns thrust in, full of pheasant eggs; tables, dice, cards, and store of tobacco pipes. At one end of this room was a door, which opened into a closet, where stood bottles of strong beer and wine; which never came out but in single glasses, which was the rule of the house; for he never exceeded himself nor permitted others to exceed. Answering to this closet, was a door into an old chapel; which had been long disused for devotion; but in the pulpit, as the safest place, was always to be found a cold chine of beef, a venison pasty, a gammon of bacon, or a great apple-pye, with thick crust well baked. His table cost him not much, though it was good to eat at. His sports supplied all, but beef and mutton; except on Fridays, when he had the best of fish. He never wanted a London pudding; and he always sang it in with "*My part lies therein-a*." He drank a glass or two of wine at meals; put syrup of gilly-flowers into his sack; and had always a tun glass of small beer standing by him, which he often stirred about with rosemary. He lived to be an hundred; and never lost his eye sight, nor used spectacles. He got on horseback without help; and rode to the death of the stag, till he was past four score." Gilpin's *Forest Scenery*; vol. ii. p. 23. 26.

Mr. Dibdin, in the second edition of his *Bibliomania*, the most pleasing and interesting book which Bibliography has ever produced, has quoted the above passage, and thus alludes, in his text, to the character which it describes:—"But what shall we say to Lord Shaftesbury's eccentric neighbour, HENRY HASTINGS? who, in spite of his hawks, hounds, kittens, and oysters, could not forbear to indulge his book-propensities, though in a moderate degree! Let us fancy we see him, in his eightieth year, just alighted from the toils of the chase, and listening, after dinner, with his 'single glass' of ale by his side, to some old woman with 'spectacle on nose,' who reads to him a choice passage out of John Fox's *Book of Martyrs*! A rare old boy was this Hastings." *Bibliomania*, p. 379.



lation of *Sir*: a title which the poet has uniformly bestowed on the inferior orders of this profession, as *Sir* Hugh in the *Merry Wives* of

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Mr. Grose, the antiquary, has given us, in his sketches of some worn-out characters of the last age, a most amusing portrait of the country squire of Queen Anne's days: "I mean," says he, "the little independant gentleman of three hundred pounds per annum, who commonly appeared in a plain drab or plush coat, large silver buttons, a jockey cap, and rarely without boots. His travels never exceeded the distance of the county town, and that only at assize and session time, or to attend an election. Once a week he commonly dined at the next market town, with the attornies and justices. This man went to church regularly, read the Weekly Journal, settled the parochial disputes between the parish officers at the vestry, and afterwards adjourned to the neighbouring ale-house, where he usually got drunk for the good of his country. He never played at cards but at Christmas, when a family pack was produced from the mantle-piece. He was commonly followed by a couple of grey-hounds and a pointer, and announced his arrival at a neighbours house by smacking his whip, or giving the view-halloo. His drink was generally ale, except on Christmas, the fifth of November, or some other gala days, when he would make a bowl of strong brandy punch garnished with a toast and nutmeg. A journey to London was, by one of these men, reckoned as great an undertaking, as is at present a voyage to the East Indies, and undertaken with scarce less precaution and preparation.

"The mansion of one of these 'Squires was of plaister striped with timber, not unaptly called callimanco work, or of red brick, large casemented bow widows, a porch with seats in it, and over it a study; the eaves of the house well inhabited by swallows, and the court set round with holly-hocks. Near the gate a horse-block for the conveniency of mounting.

"The hall was furnished with flitches of bacon, and the mantle-piece with guns and fishing rods of different dimensions, accompanied by the broad sword, partizan, and dagger, borne by his ancestor in the civil wars. The vacant spaces were occupied by stag's horns. Against the wall was posted King Charles's Golden Rules, Vincent Wing's Almanack, and a portrait of the Duke of Marlborough; in his window lay Baker's Chronicle, Fox's Book of Martyrs, Glanvil on Apparitions, Quincey's Dispensatory, the Complete Justice, and a Book of Farriery.

"In the corner, by the fire side, stood a large wooden two-armed chair with a cushion; and within the chimney corner were a couple of seats. Here, at Christmas, he entertained his tenants assembled round a glowing fire made of the roots of trees, and other great logs, and told and heard the traditionary tales of the village respecting ghosts and witches, till fear made them afraid to move. In the mean time the jorum of ale was in continual circulation.

"The best parlour, which was never opened but on particular occasions, was furnished with Turk-worked chain, and hung round with portraits of his ancestors; the men in the character of shepherds, with their crooks, dressed in full suits and huge full-bottomed perukes; others in complete armour or buff coats, playing on the base viol or



Windsor, *Sir* Topas in the Twelfth Night, *Sir* Oliver in As You like It, and *Sir* Nathaniel in Love's Labour's lost. This custom, which was not entirely discontinued until the close of the reign of Charles II., owes its origin to the language of our universities, which confers the designation of *Dominus* on those who have taken their first degree or bachelor of arts, and not, as has been supposed, to any claim which the clergy had upon the order of knighthood. The word *Dominus* was naturally translated *Sir*; and as almost every clergyman had taken his first degree, it became customary to apply the term to the lower class of the hierarchy. "*Sir* seems to have been a title," remarks Dr. Percy, "formerly appropriated to such of the inferior clergy as were only *readers* of the service, and not admitted to be preachers, and therefore were held in the lowest estimation, as appears from a remarkable passage in Machell's MS. *Collections for the History of Westmoreland and Cumberland*, in six volumes, folio, preserved in the Dean and Chapter's library at Carlisle. The Rev. Thomas Machell, author of the Collections, lived temp. Car. II. Speaking of the little chapel of Martindale in the mountains of Westmoreland and Cumberland, the writer says, 'There is little remarkable in or about it, but a neat chapel yard, which, by the peculiar care of the old reader, *Sir Richard* \*, is kept clean, and as neat as a bowling-green.'

"Within the limits of myne own memory all *readers* in chapels were called *Sirs* †, and of old have been writ so; whence, I suppose, such of the laity as received the noble order of knighthood being

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lute. The females likewise as shepherdesses, with the lamb and crook, all habited in high heads and flowing robes.

"Alas! these men and these houses are no more!

*Grase's Olio*, 2d edit. 1796. p. 41—44.

\* Richard Berket Reader, æt. 74. MS. note.

† In the margin is a MS. note seemingly in the hand-writing of Bishop Nicholson, who gave these volumes to the library:

"Since I can remember there was not a reader in any chapel but was called *Sir*."



called *Sirs* too, for distinction sake had *Knight* writ after them; which had been superfluous, if the title *Sir* had been peculiar to them." \*

Shakspeare has himself indeed sufficiently marked the distinction between priesthood and knighthood, when he makes Viola say, "I am one that had rather go with *Sir Priest* than *Sir Knight*." †

Were we to estimate the character of the country-clergy, during the age of Elizabeth, from the sketches which Shakspeare has given us of them, I am afraid we should be induced to appreciate their utility and moral virtue on too low a scale. It will be a fairer plan to exhibit the picture from the delineation of one of their own order, a competent judge, and who was likewise a contemporary. "The apparell of our clergiemmen," records Harrison, "is comlie, and, in truth, more decent than ever it was in the popish church: before the universities bound their graduats unto a stable attire, afterward usurped also even by the blind Sir Johns. For if you peruse well my chronologie, you shall find, that they went either in diverse colors, like plaiers, or in garments of light hew, as yellow, red, greene, &c.: with their shoes piked, their haire crisped, their girdles armed with silver; their shoes, spurres, bridles, &c. buckled with like metall: their apparell (for the most part) of silke, and richlie furred; their cappes laced and butned with gold: so that to meet a priest in those daies, was to behold a peacocke that spreadeth his taile when he danseth before the henne: which now (I saie) is well reformed. Touching hospitalitie, there was never any greater used in England, sith by reason that marriage is permitted to him that will choose that kind of life, their meat and drinke is more orderly and frugallie dressed; their furniture of houshold more convenient, and better looked unto; and the poore oftener fed generallie than heretofore they have beene." Then, alluding to those who reproach the country-clergy for not being so prodigal of good cheer as in former days, he adds, "To such as doo consider of the curtailing of their livings, or

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 8. note.

† Twelfth Night, act iii. sc. 4.



excessive prices wherevnto things are growen, and how their course is limited by law, and estate looked into on every side, the cause of their so dooing is well inough perceived. This also offendeth manie, that they should after their deaths leave their substances to their wives and children: whereas they consider not, that in old time such as had no lemans nor bastards (verie few were there God wot of this sort) did leave their goods and possessions to their brethren and kinsfolk, whereby (as I can shew by good record) manie houses of gentilitie have growen and beene erected. If in anie age some one of them did found a college, almes-house, or schoole, if you looke unto these our times, you shall see no fewer deeds of charitie doone, nor better grounded upon the right stub of pietie than before. If you saie that their wives be fond, after the decease of their husbands, and bestow themselves not so advisedlie as their calling requireth, which God knoweth these curious surveiors make small accompt of in truth, further than thereby to gather matter of reprehension: I beseech you then to look into all states of the laitie, and tell me whether some duchesses, countesses, barons, or knights' wives, doo not fullie so often offend in the like as they: for Eve will be Eve, though Adam would saie naie. Not a few also find fault with our thread-bare gowns, as if not our patrons but our wives were causes of our wo: but if it were knowne to all, that I know to have beene performed of late in Essex, where a minister taking a benefice (of lesse than twentie pounds in the Quéen's bookes so farre as I remember) was inforced to paie to his patrone, twentie quarters of otes, ten quarters of wheat, and sixtéene yéerlie of barleie, which he called hawkes-meat; and another left the like in farme to his patrone fortien pounds by the yéere, which is well worth fortie at the least, the cause of our thread-bare gowns would easilie appeere, for such patrones doo scrape the wooll from our clokes."\*

This delineation is, upon the whole, a favourable one; but the author in the very next page admits that the country-clergy had not-

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 233, 234.

withstanding fallen into "general contempt" and "small consideration;" that the cause of this was not merely owing to the poverty of the ministry, but was for the most part attributable either to the iniquity of the patron or the immorality of the priest, will but too clearly appear from the relation of Harrison himself, and from other contemporary evidence. The historian declares that it was the custom of some patrons to "bestow advowsons of benefices upon their bakers, butlers, cookes, good archers, falconers, and horsekéepers, insted of other recompence for their long and faithfull service \*;" and the following letter from the Talbot papers presents us with a frightful view of the manners of the country-clergy at the commencement of the reign of James I.

" Ad. Slack to the Lady Bowes.

" Right wor<sup>th</sup>.

" I understand that one Raphe Cleaton ys curate of the chappell at Buxton; his wages are, out of his neighbour's benevolence, about v<sup>n</sup> yearly: S<sup>r</sup> Charles Cavendishe had the tythes there this last yeare, ether of his owne right or my Lords, as th' inhabitants saye. The minister aforenamed differeth litle from those of the worste sorte, and hath dipt his finger both in manslaughter and p'jurie, &c. The placinge or displacing of the curate there resteth in Mr. Walker, commissarie of Bakewell, of which churche Buxton is a chappell of ease.

" I humbly thanke yo<sup>r</sup> Wor<sup>pp</sup> for yo<sup>r</sup> l<sup>te</sup> to the justices at the cessions; for S<sup>r</sup> Peter Fretchvell, together w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Bainbrigg, were verie earnest against the badd vicar of Hope; and lykewyse S<sup>r</sup> Jermane Poole, and all the benche, savinge Justice Bentley, who use some vaine ——— on his behalfe, and affirmed that my La. Bowes had been disprooved before My Lord of Shrowesburie in reports touching the vicar of Hope; but such answere was made therto as his mouthe was stopped: yet the latter daie, when all the justic's but himselffe and

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 231.



one other were rysen, he wold have had the said vicar lycensed to sell ale in his vicaredge, althoe the whole benche had comanded the contrarye; whereof S<sup>r</sup> Jermane Poole being adv'tised, retyrned to the benche (contradicting his speeche) whoe, w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Bainbrigge, made their warrant to bringe before them, him, or anie other person that shall, for him, or in his vicaridge, brue, or sell ale, &c. He ys not to bee punished by the Justices for the multytude of his women, untill the basterds whereof he is the reputed father bee brought in. I am the more boulde to wryte so longe of this sorrie matter, in respect you maye take so much better knowledge of S<sup>r</sup> Jo. Bentley, and his p'tialytie in so vile a cause; and esteeme and judge of him accordinge to y<sup>r</sup> wisdome and good discretion. Thus, humbly cravinge p'don, I comitt y<sup>r</sup> good Wors. to the everlasting Lorde, who ever keepe you. This 12th of Octob. 1609.

"Yo<sup>r</sup> La' humble poore tenant, at comandm<sup>t</sup>."

"AD. SLACK. \*

"To the right wor<sup>th</sup> my good Ladie, the  
La. Bowes of Walton, geive theise."

That men who could thus debase themselves should be held in little esteem, and their services ill requited, cannot excite our wonder; and we consequently read without surprise, that in the days of Elizabeth, the minstrel and the cook were often better paid than the priest;—thus on the books of the Stationers' Company for the year 1560, may be found the following entry :

	s.	d.
" Item, payd to the preacher	vi	2
Item, payd to the minstrell	xij	0
Item, payd to the coke	xv	0"†

Let us not conclude, however, that the age of Shakspeare was without instances of a far different kind, and that religion and virtue were

\* Lodge's Illustrations, vol. iii. p. 391.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 221. note 7.

altogether excluded from what ought to have been their most favoured abode ; it will be sufficient to mention the name of *Bernard Gilpin*, the most exemplary of parish-priests, whose humility, benevolence, and exalted piety were never exceeded, and whose ministerial labours were such as to form a noble contrast to the shameful neglect of the pastoral care which existed around him. Indeed we are inclined to infer, notwithstanding the numerous individual instances of profligacy and dissipation which may be brought forward, that the country clergy then, as now, if considered in the aggregate, possessed more real virtue and utility than any other equally numerous body of men ; but that aberrations from the stricter decency of their order were, as is still very properly the case in the present day, marked with avidity, and censured with abhorrence. To the younger clergy in the country, also, was frequently committed the task of education, a labour of unspeakable importance, but in the period of which we are writing, attended too often with the most undeserved contumely and contempt. In the Scholemaster of Ascham may be found the most bitter complaints of the barbarous and disgraceful treatment of the able instructor of youth ; and the following sketches of the clerical tutor from Peacham and Hall, will still further heighten and authenticate the picture. The former of these writers observes, “ Such is the most base and ridiculous parsimony of many of our Gentlemen, (if I may so terme them) that if they can procure some poore Batchelor of Art from the Universitie to teach their children to say grace, and serve the cure of an impropriation, who wanting meanes and friends, will be content upon the promise of ten pounds a yeere at his first comming, to be pleased with five ; the rest to be set off in hope of the next advouson, (which perhaps was sold before the young man was borne) : Or if it chance to fall in his time, his lady or master tels him ; ‘ Indeed Sir we are beholden unto you for your paines, such a living is lately falne, but I had before made a promise of it to my butler or bailiffe, for his true and extraordinary service.’

“ Is it not commonly seene, that the most Gentlemen will give better wages, and deale more bountifully with a fellow who can but



a dogge, or reclaime a hawke, than upon an honest, learned, and well qualified man to bring up their children? It may be, hence it is, that dogges are able to make syllogismes in the fields, when their young masters can conclude nothing at home, if occasion of argument or discourse be offered at the table.” \*

The domestic chaplain of Bishop Hall is touched with a glowing pencil, and while it faithfully exhibits the servile and depressed state of the poor tutor, is, at the same time, wrought up with much point and humour.

“ A gentle squire would gladly entertaine  
 Into his house some trencher-chapelaine ;  
 Some willing man, that might instruct his sons,  
 And that would stand to good conditions.  
 First, that he lie upon the truckle-bed,  
 While his young maister lieth o’er his head :  
 Second, that he do, upon no default,  
 Never presume to sit above the salt :  
 Third, that he never change his trencher twise ;  
 Fourth, that he use all common courtesies :  
 Sit bare at meales, and one half rise and wait :  
 Last, that he never his young maister beat ;  
 But he must aske his mother to define  
 How manie jerks she would his breech should line.  
 All these observ’d, he could contented be,  
 To give five markes, and winter liverie.” †

From the description of the character of the country clerical tutor, it is an easy transition to that of the *rural pedagogue or schoolmaster*, a personage of not less consequence in the days of Elizabeth, than in the present period. He frequently combined, indeed, in the sixteenth century, the reputation of a conjuror with that of a schoolmaster, and

\* The Compleat Gentleman. Fashioning him absolut, in the most necessary and commendable Qualities concerning Minde or Body that may be required in a Noble Gentleman. By Henry Peacham Master of Arts : Sometime of Trinitie Colledge in Cambridge.

This book, which is written in an easy and elegant style, was published in 1622, and has been several times reprinted ; it is a work of considerable interest and amusement, and throws much light on the education and literature of its times.

† Hall’s Satires, Book ii. sat. 6.

accordingly in the *Comedy of Errors*, *Pinch*, in the *dramatis personæ*, is described as “a schoolmaster, and a conjuror,” and the following not very amiable portrait of his person is given towards the conclusion of the play :—

“ They brought one Pinch ; a hungry lean-faced villain,  
A meer anatomy, a mountebank,  
A thread-bare juggler, and a fortune-teller ;  
A needy, hollow-eye'd, sharp-looking wretch,  
A living dead man : this pernicious slave,  
Forsooth, took him on as conjuror.” \*

Ben Jonson also alludes to this union of occupations when he says, “ I would have ne’er a cunning *schoolemaster* in England, I mean a Cunningman as a schoolemaster ; that is, a Conjurour.” †

A less formidable figure of a schoolmaster has been given us by Shakspeare, under the character of Holofernes, in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, where he has drawn a full-length caricature of the too frequent pedantry of this profession. Yet Holofernes, though he speak *a leash of languages at once*, is not deficient either in ability or discrimination ; he ridicules with much good sense and humour the literary fops of his day, the “ rackers of orthography ;” and his conversation is described by his friend, Sir Nathaniel, the Curate, as possessing all the requisites to perfection. “ Sir : your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious ; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without impudency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy.” ‡ “ It is very difficult,” remarks Dr. Johnson, “ to add any thing to this character of the schoolmaster’s table-talk, and perhaps all the precepts of Castiglione will scarcely be found to comprehend a rule for conversation so justly delineated, so widely dilated, and so nicely limited.” §

The country-schoolmasters in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, were, however, if we trust to the accounts of Ascham and Peacham, in

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 451.

† The Staple of Newes, the third Intermeane after the third act.

‡ Act v. sc. 1.

§ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 132. note 7.



general many degrees below the pedagogue of Shakspeare in ability ; tyranny and ignorance appear to have been their chief characteristics ; to such an extent, indeed, were they deficient in point of necessary knowledge, that Peacham, speaking of bad masters, declares, " it is a generall plague and complaint of the whole land ; for, for one discreet and able teacher, you shall finde twenty ignorant and carelesse ; who (among so many fertile and delicate wits as *England* affordeth) whereas they make one scholler, they marre ten." \*

Ascham had endeavoured, by every argument and mode of persuasion in his power, to check the severe and indiscriminate discipline which prevailed among the teachers in his time ; it would seem in vain ; for Peacham, about the year 1620, found it necessary to recommend lenity in equally strenuous terms, and has given a minute and we have no doubt a faithful picture of the various cruelties to which scholars were then subjected ; a summary of the result of this conduct may be drawn, indeed, from his own words, where he says, " Masters for the most part so behave themselves, that their very name is hatefull to the scholler, who trembleth at their comming in, rejoyceth at their absence, and looketh his master (returned) in the the face, as his deadly enemy." †

To the charges of undue severity and defective literature, we must add, I am afraid, the infinitely more weighty accusation of frequent immorality and buffoonery. Ludovicus Vives, who wrote just before the age of Shakspeare, asserts, that " some schoolmasters taught Ovid's books of love to their scholars, and some made expositions, and expounded the vices ‡ ;" and Peacham, at the close of the era we are considering, censures in the strongest terms their too common levity and misconduct : " the diseases whereunto some of them are very subject, are *humour* and *folly* (that I may say nothing of the grosse ignorance and insufficiency of many) whereby they become ridiculous and contemptible both in the schoole and abroad. Hence

\* Compleat Gentleman, p. 22. edit. of 1634.

† Ibid. p. 25.

‡ Instruction of a Christian Woman, 4to. edit. of 1557.



it comes to passe, that in many places, especially in Italy, of all professions that of *pedanteria* is held in basest repute : the schoole-master almost in every comedy being brought upon the stage, to paralell the *Zani* or *Pantaloun*. He made us good sport in that excellent comedy of *Pedantius*, acted in our Trinity Colledge in *Cambridge*, and if I be not deceived, in *Priscianus Vapulans*, and many of our English plays.

“ I knew one, who in winter would ordinarily in a cold morning, whip his boyes over for no other purpose than to get himselfe a heat : another beat them for swearing, and all the while he sweares himselfe with horrible oathes, he would forgive any fault saving that.

“ I had I remember myselfe (neere *S. Albanes* in *Hertfordshire*, where I was borne) a master, who by no entreaty would teach any scholler he had, farther than his father had learned before him ; as, if he had onely learned but to reade English, the sonne, though he went with him seven yeeres, should goe no further : his reason was, they would then proove saucy rogues, and controule their fathers : yet these are they that oftentimes have our hopefull gentry under their charge and tuition, to bring them in science and civility.” \*

We must, I apprehend, from these representations, be induced to conclude, that ignorance, despotism, and self-sufficiency were leading features in the composition of the country-schoolmaster, during this period of our annals ; it would not be just, however, to infer from these premises that the larger schools were equally unfortunate in their conductors ; on the contrary, most of the public seminaries of the capital, and many in the large provincial towns, were under the regulation of masters highly respectable for their erudition, men, indeed, to whom neither Erasmus nor Joseph Scaliger would have refused the title of ripe and good scholars.

We shall now pass forward, in the series of our rural characters, to the delineation of one of great importance in a national point of view, that of the substantial Farmer or Yeoman, of whom Harrison has left us the following interesting definition : —“ This sort of people have a

\* Compleat Gentleman, p. 26, 27.



certaine preheminance, and more estimation than labourers and the common sort of artificers, and these commonlie live wealthilie, kéepe good houses, and travell to get riches. They are also for the most part farmers to gentlemen, or at the leastwise artificers, and with grazing, frequenting of markets, and kéeeping of servants (not idle servants, as the gentlemen doo, but such as get both their owne and part of their masters living) do come to great welth, in somuch that manie of them are able and doo buie the lands of unthrifitie gentlemen, and often setting their sonnes to the schooles, to the universities, and to the Ins of the court; or otherwise leaving them sufficient lands whereupon they may live without labour, doo make them by those meanes to become gentlemen: these were they that in times past made all France afraid. And albeit they be not called master, as gentlemen are, or sir as to knights apperteineth, but onelie John and Thomas, &c.: yet have they beene found to have doone verie good service: and the kings of England in foughten battels, were woont to remaine among them (who were their footmen) as the French kings did amongst their horssemen: the prince thereby shewing where his chiefe strength did consist." \*

After this description of the rank which the farmer held in society, we shall proceed to state the mode in which he commonly lived in the age of Elizabeth; and in doing this we have chosen, as usual, to adopt at considerable length the language of our old writers; a practice to which we shall in future adhere, while detailing the manners, customs, &c. of our ancestors, a practice which has indeed peculiar advantages; for the authenticity of the source is at once apparent, the diction possesses a peculiar charm from its antique cast, and the expression has a raciness and force of colouring, which owes its origin to actual inspection, and which, consequently, it is in vain to expect, on such subjects, from modern composition.

The houses or cottages of the farmer were built, in places abounding in wood, in a very strong and substantial manner, with not more

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 275.

than four, six, or nine inches between stud and stud ; but in the open and champaine country, they were compelled to use more flimsy materials, with here and there a girding to which they fastened their splints, and then covered the whole with thick clay to keep out the wind. " Certes this rude kind of building," says Harrison, " made the Spaniards in quéene Maries daies to wonder, but chéeffie when they saw what large diet was used in manie of these so homelie cottages, in so much that one of no small reputation amongst them said after this manner : ' These English (quoth he) have their houses made of sticks and durt, but they fare commonlie so well as the king.' Whereby it appeareth that he liked better of our good fare in such coarse cabins, than of their owne thin diet in their prince-like habitations and palaces." \* The cottages of the peasantry usually consisted of but two rooms on the ground-floor, the outer for the servants, the inner for the master and his family, and they were thatched with straw or sedge ; while the dwelling of the substantial farmer was distributed into several rooms above and beneath, was coated with white lime or cement, and was very neatly roofed with reed ; hence Tusser, speaking of the farm-house, gives the following directions for repairing and preserving its thatch in the month of May :

" Where houses be reeded (as houses have need)  
Now pare of the mosse, and go beat in the reed :  
The juster ye drive it, the smoother and plaine,  
More handsome ye make it, to shut off the raine." †

A few years before the era of which we are treating, the venerable Hugh Latimer, describing in one of his impressive sermons the economy of a farmer in his time, tells us that his father, who was a

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 315.

† Three editions of Tusser's Poem on Husbandry are now before me ; the first printed in 1557, entitled *A Hundreth good Pointes of Husbandrie* ; the 4to. edition of 1586, termed *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie* ; and *Tusser Redivivus*, by Daniel Hilman, first published in 1710, and again in 1744 ; the quatrain just quoted is from the copy of 1744, p. 56.



yeoman, had no land of his own, but only "a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the utmost; and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had a walk for an hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. He kept his son at school till he went to the university, and maintained him there; he married his daughters with five pounds or twenty nobles a piece; he kept hospitality with his neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor; and all this he did out of the said farm."\*

Land let, at this period, it should be remembered, at about a shilling per acre; but in the reign of Elizabeth its value rapidly increased, together with a proportional augmentation of the comfort of the farmer, who even began to exhibit the elegancies and luxuries of life. Of the change which took place in rural economy towards the close of the sixteenth century, the following faithful and interesting picture has been drawn by the pencil of Harrison, who, noticing the additional splendour of gentlemen's houses, remarks,—“ In times past the costlie furniture staid *there*, whereas now it is descended yet lower, even unto manie farmers, who by vertue of their old and not of their new leases, have for the most part learned also to garnish their cup-bords with plate, their ioined beds with tapistrie and silke hangings, and their tables with carpets and fine naperie, whereby the wealth of our cuntry (God be praised therefore, and give us grace to imploie it well) dooth infinitlie appeare. Neither doo I speake this in reproch of anie man, God is my judge, but to shew that I do rejoyse rather, to see how God hath blessed us with his good gifts; and whilest I behold how that in a time wherein all things are growen to most excessive prices, and what commoditie so ever is to be had, is daily plucked from the commonaltie by such as looke in to everie trade, we doo yet find the means to obtain and atchive such furniture as here to fore hath beene impossible. There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remaine, which have noted three things to be marvellouslie altered in England within their sound remembrance; and other three

\* Gilpin's Life of Latimer, p. 2.



things too too much encreased. *One* is, the multitude of chimnies latelie erected, wheras in their yoong daies there were not above two or three, if so manie in most uplandish townes of the realme, (the religious houses, and manor places of their lords alwaies excepted, and peradventure some great personages) but ech one made his fire against a rere dosse in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat.

“ The *second* is the great (although not generall) amendment of lodging, for (said they) our fathers (yea and wee ourselves also) have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered onlie with a shéet, under coverlets made of dagswain or hop harlots (I use their owne termes) and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that our fathers or the good man of the house, had within seven yeares after his mariage purchased a matteres or flokkebed, and thereto a sacke of chaffe to rest his head upon, he thought himselfe to be as well lodged as the lord of the towne, that peradventure laie seldome in a bed of downe or whole fethers; so well were they contented, and with such base kind of furniture: which also is not verie much amended as yet in some parts of Bedfordshire, and elsewhere further off from our southerne parts. Pillowes (said they) were thought méet onelie for women in child bed. As for servants, if they had anie shéet above them it was well, for seldome had they anie under their bodies, to kéepe them from the pricking straws that ran oft through the canvas of the pallet, and rased their hardened hides.

“ The *third* thing they tell of, is the exchange of vessell, as of treene platters into pewter, and wodden spoones into silver or tin. For so common was all sorts of tréene stuff in old time, that a man should hardlie find four péeces of pewter (of which one was peradventure a salt) in a good farmer's house, and yet for all this frugalitie (if it may so be justly called) they were scarce able to live and paie their rents at their daies without selling of a cow, or an horsse, or more, although they paid but foure pounds at the uttermost by the yeare. Such also was their povertie, that if some one od farmer or husbandman had béene at the alehouse, a thing greatlie



used in those daies, amongst six or seven of his neighbours, and there in a braverie to shew what store he had; did cast downe his purse, and therein a noble or six shillings in silver unto them (for few such men then cared for gold because it was not so readie paiment, and they were oft inforced to give a penie for the exchange of an angell) it was verie likelie that all the rest could not laie downe so much against it: whereas in my time, although peradventure foure poundes of old rent be improved to fortie, fiftie, or an hundred pounds, yet will the farmer as another palme or date tree thinke his gaines verie small toward the end of his terme, if he have not six or seven yeares rent lieing by him, therewith to purchase a new lease, beside a faire garnish of pewter on his cupbord, with so much in od vessell going about the house, threé or foure feather beds, so manie coverlids and carpets of tapistrie, a silver salt, a bowle for wine (if not an whole neast) and a dozen of spoones to furnish up the sute."\*

To this curious delineation of the furniture and household accommodation of the farmer, it will be necessary, in order to complete the sketch, to add a few things relative to his diet and hospitality. Contrary to what has taken place in modern times, the hours for meals were later with the artificer and the husbandman than with the higher order of society; the farmer and his servants usually sitting down to dinner at one o'clock, and to supper at seven, while the nobleman and gentleman took the first at eleven in the morning, and the second at five in the afternoon.

It would appear that, from the cottage to the palace, good eating was as much cultivated in the days of Elizabeth as it has been in any subsequent period; and the rites of hospitality, more especially in the country, were observed with a frequency and cordiality which a further progress in civilisation has rather tended to check than to increase.

Of the larder of the cotter and the shepherd, and of the hospitality of the former, a pretty accurate idea may be acquired from the

\* Holinshed, vol. i. p. 317, 318.

simple yet beautiful strains of an old pastoral bard of Elizabeth's days, who, describing a nobleman fatigued by the chase, the heat of the weather, and long fasting, adds that he —

“ Did house him in a peakish graunge,  
Within a forrest great :

Wheare, knowne, and welcom'd, as the place  
And persons might afforde,  
Browne bread, whig, bacon, curds, and milke,  
Were set him on the borde :

A cushion made of lists, a stoole  
Half backed with a houpe,  
Were brought him, and he sitteth down  
Besides a sorry coupe.

The poor old couple wish't their bread  
Were wheat, their whig were perry,  
Their bacon beefe, their milke and curds  
Weare creame, to make him mery.”\*

The picture of the shepherd youth is so exquisitely drawn that, though only a portion of it is illustrative of our subject, we cannot avoid giving so much of the text as will render the figure complete.

“ Sweet growte, or whig, his bottle had  
As much as it might hold :

A sheeve of bread as browne as nut,  
And cheese as white as snowe,  
And wildings, or the season's fruite,  
He did in scrip bestow :

And whil'st his py-bald curre did sleepe,  
And sheep-hooke lay him by,  
On hollow quilles of oten strawe  
He piped melody : —

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\* Warner's Albion's England, chap. 42. Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 602.



With the sun  
 He doth his flocke unfold,  
 And all the day on hill or plaine  
 He merrie chat can hold:

And with the sun doth folde againe;  
 Then jogging home betime,  
*He turnes a crab*, or tunes a round,  
 Or sings some merrie ryme:

*Nor lackes he gleeful tales to tell,*  
*Whil'st round the bole doth trot;*  
 And sitteth singing care away,  
 Till he to bed hath got.

Theare sleeps he soundly all the night,  
 Forgetting morrow cares,  
 Nor feares he blasting of his corne  
 Nor uttering of his wares,

Or stormes by seas, or stirres on land,  
 Or cracke of credite lost,  
 Not spending franklier than his flocke  
 Shall still defray the cost.

Wel wot I, sooth they say that say:  
 More quiet nightes and daies  
 The shepheard sleepes and wakes than he  
 Whose cattel he doth graize.\*

The lines in Italics allude to the favourite beverage of the peasantry, and the mode in which they recreated themselves over the spicy bowl. To *turne a crab* is to roast a wilding or wild apple in the fire for the purpose of being thrown hissing hot into a bowl of nut-brown ale, into which had been previously put a toast with some spice and sugar. To this delicious compound Shakspeare has frequently referred; thus in *Love's Labour's Lost* one of his designations of winter is,

“ When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl:”†

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\* Warner in Chalmers's Poets, vol. iv. p. 552, 553.

† Act v. sc. 2. Song at the conclusion.

and Puck, describing his own wanton tricks in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, says —

“ And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab,  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob.” \*

The very expression to *turn a crab* will be found in the following passages from two old plays, in the first of which the good man says he will

“ Sit down in *his* chaire by *his* wife faire Alison,  
And *turne a crabbe* in the fire ;” †

and in the second, Christmas is personified

— “ sitting in a corner *turning crabs*,  
Or coughing o'er a warmed pot of ale. ‡

Nor can we omit, in closing this series of quotations, the following stanza of a fine old song in the curious comedy of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, first printed in 1575 :

“ I love no rost, but a nut brown toste,  
and a *crab layde in the fyre* ;  
A lytle bread shall do me stead,  
much bread I not desyre.

No froste nor snow, no winde, I trow,  
can hurte me if I wolde,  
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt  
of joly good ale, and olde.

Back and syde go bare, go bare,  
booth foote and hande go colde ;  
But belly, God sende thee good ale ynoughe,  
whether it be newe or olde. §

\* Act ii. sc. 1.

† Damon and Pithias, 1582.

‡ Summer's Last Will and Testament, by Nash, 1600.

§ Introductory Song to the second acte. Vide Ancient British Drama, vol. i.



To tell gleeful tales, "whilst round the bole doth trot," was an amusement much more common among our ancestors, during the age of Elizabeth, and the subsequent century, than it has been in any later period. The *Winter's Tale* of Shakspeare owes its title to this custom, of which an example is placed before us in the first scene of the second act.

*Her.* Come Sir—

— Pray you, sit by us,  
And tell 's a tale.

*Mam.* Merry, or sad, shal't be?

*Her.* As merry as you will.\*

And Burton, the first edition of whose *Anatomy of Melancholy* was published in 1617, enumerates, among the ordinary recreations of Winter, "merry tales of errant knights, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, cheaters, witches, fayries, goblins, friars, &c. — which some delight to hear, some to tell; all are well pleased with;" and he remarks shortly afterwards, "when three or four good companions meet, they tell old stories by the fire-side, or in the sun, as old folks usually do, remembering afresh and with pleasure antient matters, and such like accidents, which happened in their younger years." † Milton also, in his *L'Allegre*, first printed in 1645, gives a conspicuous station

— "to the spicy nut-brown ale,  
With stories told of many a feat:"

and adds,

"Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,  
By whispering winds soon lull'd to sleep." ‡

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 255.

† Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 172, 173., eighth edition of 1676.

‡ Milton's *Poems* by Warton, second edition, p. 56. 61.

The farmer's daily diet may be drawn with sufficient accuracy from the curious old Georgic of Tusser, a poem which, more than any other that we possess, throws light upon the agricultural manners and customs of the age. In Lent, says this entertaining bard, the farmer must in the first place consume his red herring, and afterwards his salt fish, which should be kept in store, indeed, and considered as good even when Lent is past, and with these leeks and peas should be procured for pottage, with the view of saving milk, oatmeal, and bread: at Easter veale and bacon are to be the chief articles; at Martilmas salted beef, "when country folk do dainties lack:" at Midsummer, when mackrel are out of season, grasse (that is sallads, &c.) fresh beef and pease: at Michaelmas fresh herring and fatted \* crones: at All Saints pork and souse, sprats and spurlings: at Christmas he enjoins the farmer to "plaie and make good cheere," and he concludes by advising him, as was the custom in Elizabeth's time, to observe Fridays, Saturdays, and Wednesdays as fish-days; to "keep embrings well and fasting dayes," and of fish and fruit be scarce, to supply their want with butter and cheese. † To these recommendations he adds, in another place, that

" Good ploughmen look weekly of custom and right,  
For rostmeat on sundaies, and thursday at night:"

and he subsequently gives directions for writing what he terms "husbandlie posies," that is, economical proverbs in rhyme, to be hung up in the Hall, the parlour, the Ghest's chamber, and the good man's own bed chamber. ‡

If the farmer have a visitor, our worthy bard is not illiberal in his allowance, but advises him to place three dishes on his table at

\* Crones are ewes whose teeth are so worn down, that they can no longer live in their sheep-walk; but will sometimes, if put into good pasture, thrive exceedingly.

† Tusser, 4to. edit. 1586., chap. 12. fol. 25, 26.

‡ Tusser, 4to. edit. 1586., fol. 138. 144, 145.



dinner, well dressed, which, says he, will be sufficient to please your friend, and will *become* your Hall. \*

On days of feasting and rejoicing, however, it appears to have been a common custom for the guests to bring their victuals with them, forming as it were a pic-nic meal; thus, Harrison, describing the occasional mirth and hospitality of the farmer, says,—“ In feasting the husbandmen doo exceed after their maner: especially at bridales, purifications of women, and such od meetings, where it is incredible to tell what meat is consumed and spent, ech one bringing such a dish, or so manie with him as his wife and he doo consult upon, but alwaies with this consideration, that the léefer fréend shall have the better provision. This also is commonlie séene at these bankets, that the good man of the house is not charged with any thing saving bread, drink, sauce, houseroome, and fire. (He then gives us the following naïve and pleasing picture of their festivity and content.) The husbandmen are sufficientlie liberall, and verie fréendlie at their tables, and when they méet, they are so mérie without malice, and plaine without inward Italian or French craft and subiltie, that it would doo a man good to be in companie among them. Herein only are the inferiour sort somewhat to be blamed, that being thus assembled, their talke is now and then such as savoureth of scurrilitie and ribaldrie, a thing naturallie incident to carters and clowns, who thinke themselves not to be merie and welcome, if their foolish veines in this behalfe be never so little restrained. This is moreover to be added in these meetings, that if they happen to stumble upon a péece of venison, and a cup of wine or verie strong beere or ale (which latter they commonlie provide against their appointed daies) they thinke their chéere so great, and themselves to have fared so well, as the lord Maïor of London, with whome when their bellies be full they will not often sticke to make comparison, (saying, *I have dined so well as my lord maïor*) because that of a subject there is no publike officer of anie citie in Europe, that may compare in port and countenance with him during the time of his office.” †

\* Tusser, 4to. of 1586. fol. 133.

† Holinshed, vol. i. p. 282.

The dress of the farmer during the middle of the sixteenth century was plain and durable; consisting, for common purposes, of coarse gray cloth or fustian, in the form of trunk-hose, frock, or doublet.

To this account of the farmer's mode of living, it will be proper to add a brief description of his coadjutor in domestic economy, the English housewife, a personage of no small importance; for, as honest Tusser has justly observed,

“ House keeping and husbandry, if it be good,  
must love one another, as cousinnes in blood.  
The wife to, must husband as well as the man,  
or farewell thy husbandry, doe what thou can.” \*

Of the qualifications necessary to constitute this useful character, Gervase Markham has given us a very curious detail, in his work entitled “ The English Housewife;” which, though not published until the close of the Shakspearian era, appears, from the dedication to Frances, Countess Dowager of Exeter, to have been written long anterior to its transmission to the press; for it is there said, “ That much of it was a manuscript which many years ago belonged to an honourable Countess, one of the greatest glories of our † kingdom.” It is a delineation which, as supposed of easy practical application, does honour to the sex and to the age. After expatiating on the necessity of a religious example to her household, on the part of the good housewife, he thus proceeds :

“ Next unto her sanctity and holiness of life, it is meet that our *English* Housewife be a woman of great modesty and temperance, as well inwardly as outwardly; inwardly, as in her behaviour and carriage towards her husband, wherein she shall shun all violence of rage, passion and humour, coveting less to direct than to be directed, appearing ever unto him pleasant, amiable and delightful; and,

\* Tusser, first edit. of 1557. title-page.

† The English House-Wife, containing the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a Compleat Woman. Ninth edition, 1683. Dedication.



tho' occasion of mishaps, or the mis-government of his will may induce her to contrary thoughts, yet vertuously to suppress them, and with a mild sufferance rather to call him home from his error, than with the strength of anger to abate the least spark of his evil, calling into her mind, that evil and uncomely language is deformed, though uttered even to servants; but most monstrous and ugly, when it appears before the presence of a husband: outwardly, as in her apparel, and dyet, both which she shall proportion according to the competency of her husband's estate and calling, making her circle rather strait than large: for it is a rule, if we extend to the uttermost, we take away increase; if we go a hairs bredth beyond, we enter into consumption: but if we preserve any part, we build strong forts against the adversaries of fortune, provided that such preservation be honest and conscionable: for as lavish prodigality is brutish, so miserable covetousness is hellish. Let therefore the Housewife's garments be comely and strong, made as well to preserve the health, as to adorn the person, altogether without toyish garnishes, or the gloss of light colours, and as far from the vanity of new and fantastick fashions, as near to the comely imitation of modest matrons. Let her dyet be wholesome and cleanly, prepared at due hours, and cook'd with care and diligence, let it be rather to satisfie nature, than her affections, and *apter* to kill *hunger* than revive *new* appetites; let it proceed *more* from the provision of her own yard, than the furniture of the markets; and let it be rather esteemed for the familiar acquaintance she hath without it, than for the strangeness and rarity it bringeth from other countries.

“ To conclude, *our English* Housewife must be of chast thoughts, stout courage, patient, untired, watchful, diligent, witty, pleasant, constant in friendship, full of good neighbour-hood, wise in discourse, but not frequent therein, sharp and quick of speech, but not bitter or talkative, secret in her affairs, comfortable in her counsels, and generally skilful in the worthy knowledges which do belong to her vocation.” \*

\* *English House-Wife*, p. 2, 3, 4.

These knowledges, he then states, should consist in an intimacy with domestic physic, with cookery, with the distillation of waters, with the making and preserving of wines, with the making and dying of cloth, with the conduct of dairies, and with malting, brewing, and baking; for all which he gives very ample directions. Markham, indeed, seems to have taken the greater part of this picture from his predecessor Tusser, in whose poems on husbandry may be found, among many others, the following excellent precepts for the conduct of the good house-wife:—

“ In Marche and in Aprill from morning to night :  
in sowing and setting good huswives delight.  
To have in their garden or some other plot:  
to trim up their house and to furnish their pot.

Have millions at Mihelmas, parsneps in lent :  
in June, buttred beanes, saveth fish to be spent.  
With those and good pottage inough having than :  
thou winnest the heart of thy laboring man.

From Aprill begin til saint Andrew be past :  
so long with good huswives their dairies doe last.  
Good milche bease and pasture, good husbandes provide :  
good huswives know best all the rest how to guide.

But huswives, that learne not to make their owne cheese :  
with trusting of others, have thes for their feese.  
Their milke slapt in corners their creame al to sost :  
their milk pannes so flotte, that their cheeses be lost.

Where some of a kowe maketh yerely a pounce :  
these huswives crye creake for their voice will not sounde.  
The servauntes suspecting their dame, lye in waighte :  
with one thing or other they trudge away straight.

Then neighbour (for god's sake) if any such be ;  
if you know a good servant, waine her to me.  
Such maister, suche man, and such mistres such mayde :  
such husbandes and huswives, suche houses araide.

For flax and for hemp, for to have of her owne :  
the wife must in May take good hede it be sowne.  
And trimme it and kepe it to serve at a nede :  
the fемble to spin and the karle for her fede.



Good husbandes abrode seketh al wel to have :  
 good huswives at home seketh al wel to save.  
 Thus having and saving in place where they meete :  
 make profit with pleasure suche couples to greeke. \*

But it is in "The points of *Huswifry* united to the comfort of *Husbandry*," of the good old poet, that we recognise the most perfect picture of the domestic economy of agricultural life in the days of Elizabeth. This material addition to the husbandry of our author appeared in 1570, and embraces a complete view of the province of the *Huswife*, with all her daily labours and duties, which are divided into — 1st, *Morning Works*; 2dly, *Breakfast Doings*; 3dly, *Dinner Matters*; 4thly, *Afternoon Works*; 5thly, *Evening Works*; 6thly, *Supper-Matters*; and 7thly, *After-Supper Matters*.

From the details of this arrangement we learn, that the servants in summer rose at four, and in winter at five o'clock; that in the latter season they were called to breakfast on the appearance of the day-star, and that the huswife herself was the carver and distributor of the meat and pottage. We find, likewise, and it is the only objectionable article in the admonitions of the poet, that he recommends his dame not to scold, but to thrash heartily her maids when refractory; and he adds a circumstance rather extraordinary, but at the same time strongly recommendatory of the effects of music, that

"Such servants are oftenest painfull and good,  
 That sing in their labour, as birds in the wood."

Dinner, he enjoins, should be taken at noon; should be quickly dispatched; and should exhibit plenty, but no dainties.

The bare table, he observes, will do as well, as if covered with a cloth, which is liable to be cut; and that wooden and pewter dishes and tin vessels for liquor are the best, as most secure; and then, with his accustomed piety, he advises the regular use of grace —

\* Tusser, first edit. p. 14, 15.

" At dinner, at supper, at morning, at night,  
Give thanks unto God."

As soon as dinner is over, the servants are again set to work, and he very humanely adds,

" To servant in seikness, see nothing ye grutch,  
A thing of a trifle shall comfort him much."

Many precepts, strictly economical, then follow, in which the huswife is directed to save her parings, drippings, and skimmings for the sake of her poultry, and for " medicine for cattle, for cart, and for shoe ;" to employ the afternoon, like a good sempstress, in making and mending ; to keep her maids cleanly in their persons, to call them quarterly to account, to mark and number accurately her linen, to save her feathers, to use little spice, and to make her own candle.

The business of the evening commences with preparations for supper, as soon as the hens go to roost ; the hogs are then to be served, the cows milked, and as night comes on, the servants return, but none empty-handed, some bringing in wood, some logs, &c. The cattle, both without and within doors, are next to be attended to, all clothes brought into the house, and no door left unbolted, and the duties of the evening close with this injunction :

" Thou woman, whom pity becometh the best,  
Grant all that hath laboured time to take rest."

Supper now is spread, and the scene opens with an excellent persuasive to cheerfulness and hospitality :

" Provide for thy husband, to make him good cheer,  
Make merry together, while time ye be here.  
A-bed and at board, howsoever befall,  
Whatever God sendeth, be merry withall.  
No taunts before servants, for hindering of fame,  
No jarring too loud, for avoiding of shame."



The servants are then ordered to be courteous, and attentive to each other, especially at their meals, and directions are given for the next morning's work.

The last section, entitled "After-supper matters," is introduced and terminated in a very moral and impressive manner. The first couplet tells us to

"Remember those children, whose parents be poor,  
Which hunger, yet dare not to crave at thy door;"

the bandog is then ordered to have the bones and the scraps; the huswife looks carefully to the fire, the candle, and the keys; the whole family retire to rest, at nine in winter, and at ten in summer, and the farmer's day closes with four lines which ought to be written in letters of gold, and which, if duly observed, would ensure a great portion of the happiness obtainable by man:

"Be lowly, not sullen, if aught go amiss,  
What wresting may lose thee, that win with a kiss.  
Both bear and forbear, now and then as ye may,  
Then wench, God a mercy! thy husband will say."\*

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\* Mavor's Tusser, p. 247. ad p. 270.

Even this, and every other description of the duties of the Huswife, may be traced to "The Book of Husbandry," written by Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, of Norbury, in Derbyshire.

This gentleman, who was a Judge of the Common Pleas, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, is justly entitled to the appellation of "the father of English Husbandry." His work, the first edition of which was printed by Richard Pynson, in 1523, 4to., underwent not less than eleven editions during the sixteenth century, and soon excited among his countrymen a most beneficial spirit of emulation. Notwithstanding these numerous impressions, there are probably not ten complete copies left in the kingdom.

One of these is, however, now before me included in a thick duodecimo, of which the *first article* is "Xenophon's treatise of householde," black letter, title wanting; the colophon, "Imprinted At London in fletestrete in the house of Thomas Berthelet. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." No date. The *second article* is "The booke of Husbandrye verye profitable and necessary for all maner of persons, newlye corrected and amended by the auctor fitzherbard, with dyvers addicions put thereunto. Anno do. 1555." black letter. Colophon, "Imprinted at London in Flete strete at the signe of the Sunne over agaynst the Conduit by John Weylande." Sixty-one leaves, exclusive of the table. The *third article* is entitled "Surveyinge," An. 1546. Colophon,



Frugality and domestic economy were not, however, the constant attributes of the farmer's wife in the age of which we are treating;

"Londini in ædibus Thome Berthelet typis impress. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." Contains sixty leaves, black letter.

From "The booke of husbandry," I shall extract the detail of huswifely duties, as a specimen of the work, and as a proof of the assertion at the commencement of this note.

"What workes a wyfe shoulde doe in generall.

"First in the mornynge when thou art wakēd and purpose to rise, lift up thy hand, and blis the and make a signe of the holy crosse. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen. In the name of the father y<sup>e</sup> sonne, and the holy gost. And if thou saye a Paternoster, an Ave and a Crede, and remembre thy maker thou shalte spede much the better, and when thou art up and readye, then firste swepe thy house: dresse up the dysse bord, and set al thynges in good order within thy house, milke y<sup>e</sup> kie, socle thy calves, sile by thy milke, take up thy children, and aray them, and provide for thy husbände's breakefast, diner, souper, and for thy children and servauntes, and take thy parte wyth them. And to ordeyne corne and malt to the myll, to bake and brue withal when nede is. And mete it to the myl and fro the myl, and se that thou have thy mesure agayne besides the tole or elles the mylner dealeth not truly wyth the, or els thy corne is not drye as it should be, thou must make butter and chese when thou may, serve thy swine both mornynge and eveninge, and give thy polen meate in the mornynge, and when tyme of yeare cometh thou must take hede how thy henne, duckes and geese do ley, and to gather up their egges and when they waxe broudy to set them there as no beastes, swyne, nor other vermyne hurt them, and thou must know that al hole foted foule wil syt a moneth and all cloven foted foule wyll syt but three wekes except a peyhen and suche other great foules as craynes, bustardes, and suche other. And when they have brought forth theyr birdes to se that they be well kepte from the gleyd, crowes fully martes and other vermyn, and in the begynnyng of March, or a lytle before is time for a wife to make her garden and to get as manye good sedes and herbes as she can, and specyally such as be good for the pot and for to eate and as ofte as nede shall require it must be weded, for els the wede wyll over grow the herbes, and also in Marche is time to sowe flaxe and hempe for I have heard olde huswyves say, that better is Marche hurdes than Apryll flaxe, the reason appereth, but howe it shoulde bee sowed, weded, pulled, repealed, watred, washen, dried, beten, braked, tawed, hecheled, spon, wounden, wrapped and oven, it nedeth not for me to shewe, for they be wyse ynough, and thereof may they make shetes, bordclothes, towels, shertes, smockes, and suche other necessaryes, and therefore lette thy dystaffe be alwaye redy for a pastyme, that thou be not ydell. And undoubted a woman can not get her livinge honestly with spinning on the dystaffe, but it stoppeth a gap and must nedes be had. The bolles of flaxe when they be rypled of, must be rediled from the wedes and made dry with the sunne to get out the sedes. Now be it one maner of linsede called loken sede wyll not open by the sunne, and therefore when they be drye they must be sore brusen and broken the wyves know how, and then wynowed and kept dry til peretime cum againe. Thy



the luxury of dress, both in England and Scotland, had already corrupted the simplicity of country-habits. Stephen Perlet, who

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femell hempe must be pulled fro the chucle hempe for this beareth no sede and thou must doe by it as thou didest by the flaxe. The chucle hempe doth beare sede, and thou must be ware that birdes eate it not as it groweth, the hempe thereof is not so good as the femel hempe, but yet it wil do good service. It may fortune sometime that thou shalte have so many thinges to do that thou shalte not wel know where is best to begyn. Then take hede which thing should be the greatest losse if it were not done and in what space it woulde be done, and then thinke what is the greatest los and ther begin. But I put case that, that thing that is of the greatest losse wyll be longe in doing, that thou might do thre or iiij other thinges in the meane whyle then loke wel if all these thinges were set togyther whiche of them were greatest losse, and yf these thynges be of greater losse, and may be al done in as shorte space as the other, then do thy many thinges fyrst. It is convenient for a husbnde to have shepe of his owne for many causes, and then may his wife have part of the wooll to make her husbnde and her selfe sum clothes. And at the least waye she may have the lockes of the shepe therwith to make clothes or blankets, and coverlets, or both. And if she have no wol of her owne she maye take woll to spynne of cloth makers, and by that meanes she may have a convenient living, and many tymes to do other workes. It is a wives occupacion to winow al maner of cornes, to make malte wash and wring, to make hey, to shere corne, and in time of nede to helpe her husbnde to fyll the mucke wayne or donge carte, dryve the plough, to lode hey corne and such other. Also to go or ride to the market to sell butter, chese, mylke, egges, chekens, kapons, hennes, pygges, gees, and al maner of corne. And also to bye al maner of necessary thinges belonging to a houshold, and to make a true rekening and accompt to her husband what she hath receyved and what she hath payed. And yf the husband go to the market to bye or sell as they ofte do, he then to shew his wife in lyke maner. For if one of them should use to disceive the other, he disceyveth himselfe, and he is not lyke to thryve, and therfore they must be true ether to other. I could peraventure shew the husbnde of divers pointes that the wives disceve their husbndes in, and in like maner how husbndes deceve their wives. But yf I should do so, I shuld shew mo subtil pointes of disceite then other of them knew of before. And therfore me semeth best to holde my peace, leste I shuld do as the knight of the tower did the which had many faire doghters, and of fatherlie love that he oughte to them he made a boke unto a good intent that they mighte eschewe and flee from vices and folowe vertues in the which boke he sheweth that yf they were woed, moved, or styrred by any man after such a maner as is there shewed that they shuld withstande it, in the which booke he shewed so manye wayes how a man shuld attaine to his purpose to bryng a woman to vice, the which waies were so naturall and the wayes to come to their purpose was so subtylly contrived and craftely shewed that hard it wolde be for any woman to resist or deny their desyre. And by the sayd boke hath made both the man and the woman to know mo vyces subtylty and crafte then ever they shoulde have knowen if the boke had not bene made, the which boke he named him selfe the knyght of the tower. And thus I leave the wyves to use theyr occupations at theyr owne discrecion." Fol. 45, 46, 47.

visited Scotland in 1553, and Fines Moryson, who made a similar tour in 1598 \*, agree in describing the dress of the common people of both countries as nearly if not altogether the same ; the picture, therefore, which Dunbar has given us of the dress of a rich farmer's wife, in Scotland, during the middle of the sixteenth century, will apply, with little fear of exaggeration, to the still wealthier dames of England. He has drawn her in a robe of fine scarlet with a white hood ; a gay purse and gingling keys pendant at her side from a silken belt of silver tissue ; on each finger she wore two rings, and round her waste was bound a sash of grass-green silk, richly embroidered with silver. † To this rural extravagancy in dress, Warner will bear an equal testimony ; for, describing two old gossips cowering over their cottage-fire, and chatting how the world was changed in their time,

“ When we were maids (quoth one of them)  
Was no such new found pride :  
Then wore they shooes of ease, now of  
An inch-broad, corked hye :  
Black karsie stockings, worsted now,  
Yea silke of youthful'st dye :

Garters of lystes, but now of silke,  
Some edged deep with gold :  
With costlier toyes, for courser turns,  
Than us'd, perhaps of old.

Fring'd and ymbroidered petticoats  
Now begge. But heard you nam'd,  
Till now of late, busks, perrewigs,  
Maskes, plumes of feathers fram'd,

Supporters, posters, fardingales  
Above the loynes to waire,  
That be she near so bombe-thin, yet  
She crosse-like seems foure-squaire ?

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\* See Antiquarian Repertory, vol. i. p. 236 ; and Moryson's Itinerary, part iii. fol. 1617.

† The Freirs of Berwick ; Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems, 12mo. 2 vols. 1786. v. 2. p. 70.



Some wives, grayheaded, shame not locks  
 Of youthfull borrowed haire :  
 Some, tiring arte, attyer their heads  
 With only tresses bare :

Some, (grosser pride than which, think I,  
 No passed age might shame)  
 By arte, abusing nature, heads  
 Of antick't hayre doe frame.

Once starching lack't the tearme, because  
 Was lacking once the toy,  
 And lack't we all these toyes and tearmes,  
 It were no griefe but joy. —

Now dwels ech drossell in her glas :  
 When I was yong, I wot,  
 On holly-dayes (for sildome els  
 Such ydell times we got)  
 A tubb or paile of water cleere  
 Stood us in steede of glas. \*

Luxury and extravagance soon spread beyond the female circle, and the *Farmer's Heir* of forty pounds a year, is described by Hall, in 1598, as dissipating his property on the follies and fopperies of the day.

“ Vilius, the wealthy farmer, left his heire  
 Twice twenty sterling pounds to spend by yeare : —  
 But whiles ten pound goes to his wife's new gowne,  
 Nor little lesse can serve to suit his owne ;  
 Whiles one piece pays her idle waiting-man,  
 Or buys an hooode, or silver-handled fanne,  
 Or hires a Friezeland trotter, halfe yard deepe,  
 To drag his tumbrell through the staring Cheape ;  
 Or whiles he rideth with two liveries,  
 And's treble rated at the subsidies ;  
 One end a kennel keeps of thriftlesse hounds ;  
 What think ye rests of all my younker's pounds  
 To diet him, or deal out at his doore,  
 To coffer up, or stocke his wasting store ?” †

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\* Warner's *Albion's England*, book ix. chap. xlvi.

† Hall's *Satires*, book v. satire 4.

In contrast to this character, who keeps a pack of hounds, and sports a couple of liveries, it will be interesting to bring forward the picture of the *poor copyholder*, as drawn by the same masterly pencil ; the description of the wretched hovel is given in all the strength of minute reality, and the avidity of the avaricious landlord is wrought up with several strokes of humour.

“ Of one bay’s breadth, God wot, a silly cote,  
Whose thatched spars are furr’d with sluttish soote  
A whole inch thick, shining like black-moor’s brows,  
Through smoke that downe the headlesse barrel blows.  
At his bed’s feete feeden his stalled teame,  
His swine beneath, his pullen o’er the beame.  
A starved tenement, such as I guesse  
Stands straggling on the wastes of Holdernesse :  
Or such as shivers on a Peake hill side, &c. —  
Yet must he haunt his greedy landlord’s hall  
With often presents at each festivall :  
With crammed capons everie new-yeare’s morne,  
Or with greene cheese when his sheepe are shorne :  
Or many maunds-full of his mellow fruite,  
To make some way to win his weighty suite. —  
The smiling landlord shews a sunshine face,  
Feigning that he will grant him further grace ;  
And leers like Esop’s foxe upon the crane,  
Whose neck he craves for his chirurgian.” \*

We shall close these characters, illustrative of rural manners, as they existed in the reigns of Elizabeth and James 1st, with a delineation of the *plain Country Fellow or down right Clown*, from the accurate pen of Bishop Earle, who has touched this homely subject with singular point and spirits.

“ A *plain country fellow* is one that manures his ground well, but lets himself lye fallow and untilled. He has reason enough to do his business, and not enough to be idle or melancholy. He seems to have the punishment of *Nebuchadnezzar*, for his conversation is among beasts, and his tallons none of the shortest, only he eats not

\* Hall’s Satires, book v. satire 1.



grass, because he loves not sallets. His hand guides the plough, and the plough his thoughts, and his ditch and land-mark is the very mound of his meditations. He expostulates with his oxen very understandingly, and speaks gee, and ree, better than English. His mind is not much distracted with objects, but if a good fat cow come in his way, he stands dumb and astonished, and though his haste be never so great, will fix here half an hour's contemplation. His habitation is some poor thatched roof, distinguished from his barn by the loop-holes that let out smoak, which the rain had long since washed through, but for the double ceiling of bacon on the inside, which has hung there from his grandsire's time, and is yet to make rashers for posterity. His dinner is his other work, for he sweats at it as much as at his labour; he is a terrible fastner on a piece of beef, and you may hope to stave the guard off sooner. His religion is a part of his copy-hold, which he takes from his land-lord, and refers it wholly to his discretion: yet if he give him leave he is a good Christian to his power, (that is,) comes to church in his best cloaths, and sits there with his neighbours, where he is capable only of two prayers, for rain, and fair weather. He apprehends God's blessings only in a good year, or a fat pasture, and never praises him but on *good ground*. Sunday, he esteems a day to make merry in, and thinks a bag-pipe as essential to it as evening prayer, where he walks very solemnly after service with his hands coupled behind him, and censures the dancing of his parish. His compliment with his neighbour is a good thump on the back, and his salutation commonly some blunt curse. He thinks nothing to be vices, but pride and ill husbandry, from which he will gravely dissuade the youth, and has some thrifty hob-nail proverbs to clout his discourse. He is a niggard all the week, except only market-day, where, if his corn sell well, he thinks he may be drunk with a good conscience. He is sensible of no calamity but the burning a stack of corn or the overflowing of a meadow, and thinks Noah's flood the greatest plague that ever was, not because it drowned the world, but spoiled the

grass. For death he is never troubled, and if he get in but his harvest before, let it come when it will, he cares not." \*

The *nine* characters which have now passed in brief review before us, namely, the *Rural Squire*; the *Rural Coxcomb*; the *Rural Clergyman*; the *Rural Pedagogue*; the *Farmer* or *substantial Yeoman*; the *Farmer's Wife*; the *Farmer's Heir*; the *Poor Copyholder*, and the mere *Ploughman* or *Country Boor*, will, to a certain extent, point out the personal manners, condition, and mode of living of those who inhabited the country, during the period in which Shakspeare flourished. They have been given from the experience, and, generally, in the very words of contemporary writers, and may, therefore, be considered as faithful portraits. To complete the picture, a further elucidation of the customs of the country, as drawn from its principal occurrences and events, will be the subject of the ensuing chapter, in which the references to the works of our immortal bard will be more frequent than could take place while collecting mere out-line draughts of rural character.

\* Earle's *Microcosmography*, p. 64. et seq. edit. of 1811, by Philip Bliss.



## CHAPTER VI.

A VIEW OF COUNTRY LIFE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE; ITS MANNERS AND CUSTOMS. — RURAL HOLYDAYS, AND FESTIVALS.

THE record of rural festivity and amusement, must, as far as it is unaccompanied by any detail of riot or intemperance, be a subject of pleasing contemplation to every good and cheerful mind. Labour, the destined portion of by far the greater part of human beings, requires frequent intervals of relaxation; and the encouragement of innocent diversion at stated periods, may be considered, therefore, both in a moral and political point of view, as essentially useful. The sports and amusements of our ancestors on their holydays and festivals, while they had little tendency to promote either luxury or dissipation, contributed very powerfully to preserve some of the best and most striking features of our national manners and character, and were frequently mingled with that cheerful piety which forms the most heart-felt species of devotion, where religion, mixing with the social rite, offers up the homage of a happy and contented heart.

It may be necessary here to mention, that in enumerating the various ceremonial and feast days of rural life, we have purposely omitted those which are *peculiarly* occupied by *superstitious* observances, as they will with more propriety be included under a subsequent chapter, appropriated to the consideration of popular superstitions.

The ushering in of the New Year, or *New Years tide*, with rejoicings, presents, and good wishes, was a custom observed, during the sixteenth century, with great regularity and parade, and was as cordially celebrated in the court of the prince as in the cottage of the peasant.

To end the old year *merrily* and begin the new one *well*, and in *friendship* with their neighbours, were the objects which the common

people had in view in the celebration of this tide or festival. New-Years Eve, therefore, was spent in festivity and frolic by the men; and the young women of the village carried about, from door to door, a bowl of spiced ale, which they offered to the inhabitants of every house where they stopped, singing at the same time some rude congratulatory verses, and expecting some small present in return. This practice, however, which originated in pure kindness and benevolence, soon degenerated into a mere pecuniary traffic, for Selden, in his *Table Talk*, thus alludes to the subject, while drawing the following curious comparison: "The pope in sending relicks to princes, does as *wenches* do by their *wassails* at *New Years Tide*.—They *present* you with a *cup*, and you must *drink* of a slabby stuff; but the meaning is, you must *give* them *money* ten times more than it is worth." \*

It was customary also, on this eve, for the young men and women to exchange their clothes, which was termed *Mumming* or *Disguising*; and when thus dressed in each other's garments, they would go from one neighbour's cottage to another, singing, dancing, and partaking of their good cheer; a species of masquerading which, as may be imagined, was often productive of the most licentious freedoms.

On the succeeding morning, the first of the New Year, presents, called new-year's gifts, were given and received, with the mutual expression of good wishes, and particularly that of a *happy New Year*. The compliment was sometimes paid at each other's doors in the form of a song; but more generally, especially in the north of England and in Scotland, the house was entered very early in the morning, by some young men and maidens selected for the purpose, who presented the spiced bowl, and hailed you with the gratulations of the season.

The custom of interchanging gifts on this day, though now nearly obsolete, was, in the days of Shakspeare, observed most scrupulously; and not merely in the country, but, as hath been just before hinted, even in the palace of the monarch. In fact the wardrobe and jewelry

\* Selden, under the article Pope. The *Table Talk*, though not printed until A. D. 1689, is a work illustrative of the era under our consideration.



of Elizabeth appear to have been supported principally by these annual contributions.

As a brief summary of these presents, though given not in the country, but at court, will yet, as including almost every rank in life, from the peer to the dustman, place in a strong light the prevalence of this custom, and point out of what these gifts usually consisted in a town, and therefore, by inference, of what they must have included in the country, its introduction will not, we should hope, be considered as altogether digressive from the nature of our subject.

To Mr. Nichols, who, in his work entitled "Queen Elizabeth's Progresses," has printed, from the original rolls in vellum, some very copious lists of New Year's gifts annually presented to this popular monarch, are we indebted for the following curious enumeration.

"From all these rolls," says he, "and more of them perhaps are still existing, it appears that the greatest part, if not all the peers and peeresses of the realm, all the bishops, the chief officers of state, and several of the Queen's household servants, even down to her apothecaries, master cook, serjeant of the pastry, &c. gave New Year's gifts to Her Majesty; consisting, in general, either of a sum of money, or jewels, trinkets, wearing apparel, &c. The largest sum given by any of the temporal lords was 20*l.*; but the Archbishop of Canterbury gave 40*l.*, the Archbishop of York 30*l.*, and the other spiritual lords 20*l.* and 10*l.*; many of the temporal lords and great officers, and most of the peeresses, gave rich gowns, petticoats, smocks, kirtles, silk stockings, cypres garters, sweet-bags, doblots, mantles, some embroidered with pearles, garnets, &c. looking-glasses, fans, bracelets, caskets studded with precious stones, jewels ornamented with sparks of diamonds in various devices, and other costly trinkets. Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter King of Arms, gave a book of the states in King William the Conqueror's time, and a book of the arms of the noblemen in Henry the Fifth's time; Absolon, the master of the Savoy, a Bible covered with cloth of gold, garnished with silver, and gilt, and two plates with the royal arms; *Petruchio Ubaldino*, a book covered with vellum of Italian; *Lambarde*, the antiquary,



his Pandecta of all the Rolls, &c. in the Tower of London. The Queen's physician presented her with a box of foreign sweetmeats ; another physician with two pots, one of green ginger, the other of orange flowers ; two other physicians gave each a pot of green ginger, and a pot of the rinds of lemons ; her apothecaries a box of lozenges, a box of ginger candy, a box of grene ginger, a box of orange candit, a pot of conserves, a pot of wardyns condite, a box of wood with prunolyn, and two boxes of *manus Christi* ; Mrs. Blanch a Parry, a little box of gold to put in cumphetts, and a little spoon of gold ; Mrs. Morgan a box of cherries, and one of aberycocks ; her master cook a fayre marchepayne ; her serjeant of the pastry a fayre pie of quinces oringed ; a box of peaches of Jenneway (Genoa) ; a great pie of quynses and wardyns guilte ; *Putrino*, an Italian, presented her with two pictures ; *Innocent Corry* with a box of lutestrings ; *Ambrose Lupo* with another box of lutestrings, and a glass of sweet water ; *Petro Lupo*, *Josepho Lupo*, and *Cæsar Caliaro*, each with a pair of sweet gloves ; a cutler with a meat knyfe with a fan haft of bone, *a conceit in it* ; *Jaromy* with twenty-four drinking-glasses ; *Jeromy Bassano* two drinking-glasses ; *Smyth, dustman*, two boltes of cambrick." \*

The Queen, though she made returns in plate and other articles, took sufficient care that the balance should be in her own favour ; hence, as the custom was found to be lucrative, and had indeed been practised with success by her predecessors on the throne, it was encouraged and rendered fashionable to an extent hitherto unprecedented in this kingdom. In the country, however, with the exception of the extensive households of the nobility, this interchange was conducted on the pure basis of reciprocal kindness and good will, and without any view of securing patronage or support ; it was, indeed, frequently the channel through which charity delighted to exert her holy influence, and though originating in the heathen world, became sanctified by the Christian virtues.

\* Nichols's Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. preface, p. 25—28.



To the rejoicings on New Year's tide succeeded, after a short interval, the observance of the *TWELFTH DAY*, so called from its being the twelfth after the Nativity of our Saviour, and the day on which the *Eastern Magi*, guided by the star, arrived at Bethlehem to worship the infant Jesus.

This festive day, the most celebrated of the twelve for the peculiar conviviality of its rites, has been observed in this kingdom ever since the reign of Alfred, in whose days, says Collier, "a Law was made with relation to Holidays, by virtue of which the *twelve days after* the Nativity of our Saviour were made Festivals." \*

In consequence of an idea, which seems generally to have prevailed, that the *Eastern Magi* were kings, this day has been frequently termed the *Feast of the Three Kings*; and many of the rites with which it is attended, are founded on this conception; for it was customary to elect, from the company assembled on this occasion, a king or queen, who was usually elevated to this rank by the fortuitous division of a cake containing a bean or piece of coin, and he or she to whom this symbol of distinction fell, in dividing the cake, was immediately chosen king or queen, and then forming their ministers and court from the company around, maintained their state and character until midnight.

The *Twelfth Cake* was almost always accompanied by the *Wassail Bowl*, a composition of spiced wine or ale, or mead, or metheglin, into which was thrown roasted apples, sugar, &c. The term *Wassail*, which in our elder poets is connected with much interesting imagery, and many curious rites, appears to have been first used in this island during the well-known interview between Vortigern and Rowena. Geoffrey of Monmouth relates, on the authority of Walter Calenius, that this lady, the daughter of Hengist, knelt down, on the approach of the king, and presenting him with a cup of wine, exclaimed "Lord king *wæs heil*," that is, literally "Health be to you." Vortigern being ignorant of the Saxon language, was informed

\* Collier's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 163.



by an interpreter, that the purport of these words was to wish him health, and that he should reply by the expression *drinc-heil*, or "Drink the health;" accordingly, on his so doing, Rowena drank, and the king receiving the cup from her hand, kissed and pledged her.\* Since this period, observes the historian, the custom has prevailed in Britain of using these words whilst drinking; the person who drank to another saying *was-heil*, and he who received the cup answering *drinc-heil*.

It soon afterwards became a custom in villages, on Christmas-Eve, New Year's Eve, and Twelfth Night, for itinerant minstrels to carry to the houses of the gentry, and others, where they were generally very hospitably received, a bowl of spiced wine, which being presented with the Saxon words just mentioned, was therefore called a *Wassail-bowl*. A bowl or cup of this description was likewise to be found in almost every nobleman's and gentleman's house, (and frequently of massy silver,) until the middle of the seventeenth century, and which was in perpetual requisition during the revels of Christmas. In "*The Antiquarian Repertory*, vol. i. p. 217," relates Mr. Douce, "there is an account, accompanied with an engraving, of an oaken chimney-piece in a very old house at Berlen, near Snodland in Kent, on which is carved a wassel-bowl resting on the branches of an apple-tree, alluding, probably, to part of the materials of which the liquor was composed. On one side is the word *wafsheil*, and on the other

\* Galfred. Monumeth. l. 3. c. 1. *Robert of Gloucester* gives us a similar account of the origin of this ceremony, and makes the same observation as to its general prevalency. The rude lines of the ancient poet have been thus beautifully paraphrased in the *Antiquarian Repertory*:—

'Health, my Lord King,' the sweet Rowena said—  
'Health,' cried the Chieftain to the Saxon maid;  
Then gaily rose, and, 'mid the concourse wide,  
Kiss'd her hale lips, and plac'd her by his side.  
At the soft scene such gentle thoughts abound,  
That healths and kisses 'mongst the guests went round:  
From this the social custom took its rise,  
We still retain, and still must keep the prize.



drincheile.\* This is certainly," he adds, "a very great curiosity of its kind, and at least as old as the fourteenth century. Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, in his will gave to Sir John Briddlewood a silver cup called *wassail*: and it appears that John Duke of Bedford, the regent, by his first will bequeathed to John Barton, his maitre d'hotel, a silver cup and cover, on which was inscribed WASHAYL."†

In consequence of the *Wassail-bowl* being peculiar to scenes of revelry and festivity, the term *wassail* in time became synonymous with feasting and carousing, and has been used, therefore, by many of our poets either to imply drinking and merriment, or the place where such joviality was expected to occur. Thus Shakspeare makes Hamlet say of the king "draining his draughts of Rhenish down," that he

"Keeps *wassel*:"‡

and in Macbeth, the heroine of that play declares that she will convince the two chamberlains of Duncan

"With wine and *wassel*."§

In Anthony and Cleopatra also, Cæsar, advising Anthony to live more temperately, tells him to leave his

"Lascivious *wassals*."||

\* "The ingenious remarker on this representation observes, that it is the figure of the old Wassel-Bowl, so much the delight of our hardy ancestors, who on the vigil of the New-Year never failed to assemble round the glowing hearth, with their chearful neighbours, and then in the spicy Wassel-Bowl (which testified the goodness of their hearts) drowned every former animosity, an example worthy modern imitation. *Wassel* was the word, *Wassel* every guest returned as he took the circling goblet from his friend, whilst song and civil mirth brought in the infant year." Brand's Observations, by Ellis, vol. i. p. 3.

† Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare and of Ancient Manners, vol. ii. p. 209, 210.

‡ Act i. sc. 4. Reed's edit. vol. xviii. p. 64.

§ Act i. sc. 7. Reed, vol. x. p. 88.

|| Act i. sc. 4. Reed, vol. xvii. p. 49.

And lastly, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Biron, describing the character of Boyet, says,

"He is wit's pedler: and retails his wares  
At wakes, and *wassels*, meetings, markets, fairs." \*

Ben Jonson has given us two curious personifications of the Wassal; the first in his *Forest*, No. 3. whilst giving an account of a rural feast in the hall of Sir Robert Wroth; he says,

"The rout of rural folk come thronging in,  
Their rudenesse then is thought no sin—  
The jolly *Wassal* walks the often round,  
And in their cups their cares are drown'd: †

and the second in "*Christmas, His Masque*, as it was presented at Court 1616," where *Wassall*, as one of the ten children of Christmas, is represented in the following quaint manner. *Like a neat Sempster, and Songster; her Page bearing a browne bowle, drest with Ribbands, and Rosemarie before her.* ‡

Fletcher, in his *Faithful Shepherdess*, has given a striking description of the festivity attendant on the Wassal bowl:

———"The woods, or some near town  
That is a neighbour to the bordering down,  
Hath drawn them thither, 'bout some lusty sport,  
Or spiced *Wassel-Bowl*, to which resort  
All the young men and maids of many a cote,  
Whilst the trim minstrell strikes his merry note." §

The persons thus accompanying the Wassal bowl, especially those who danced and played, were called *Wassailers*, an appellation which it was afterwards customary to bestow on all who indulged, at any season, in intemperate mirth. Hence Milton introduces his Lady in *Comus* making use of the term in the following beautiful passage:

\* Act v. sc. 2. Reed, vol. vii. p. 165.

† Jonson's Works, fol. vol. ii. 1640.

‡ Epigrammes i. booke folio 1640, p. 50.

§ Act v. sc. 1.



“ Methought it was the sound  
 Of riot and ill-manag’d merriment,  
 Such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe  
 Stirs up among the loose unletter’d hinds,  
 When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,  
 In wanton dance, they praise the bounteous Pan,  
 And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath  
 To meet the rudeness, and swill’d insolence,  
 Of such late *wassailers*.” \*

During the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. the celebration of Twelfth Night was, equally with Christmas-Day, a festival through the land, and was observed with great ostentation and ceremony in both the Universities, at Court, at the Temple, and at Lincoln’s and

\* Warton’s Milton, 2d edit. p. 160. The *Peg Tankard*, a species of Wassail-Bowl introduced by the Saxons, was still in use in the days of Shakspeare. I am in possession of one, which was given to a member of my family about one hundred and fifty years ago; it is of chased silver, containing nearly two quarts, and is divided by four pegs.

This form of the *wassail* or *wish-health bowl* was introduced by *Dunstan*, with the view of checking the intemperance of his countrymen, which for a time it effected; but subsequently the remedy was converted into an additional stimulus to excess; “for, refining upon Dunstan’s plan, each was obliged to drink precisely to a pin, whether he could sustain a quantity of liquor equal to others or not: and to that end it became a rule, that whether they exceeded, or fell short of the prescribed bumper, they were alike compelled to drink *again*, until they reached the next mark. In the year 1102, the *priests*, who had not been backward in joining and encouraging these drunken assemblies, were ordered to avoid such abominations, and wholly to *discontinue* the practice of “DRINKING TO PEGS.” Some of these PEG or PIN CUPS, or *Bowls*, and PIN or PEG TANKARDS, are yet to be found in the cabinets of antiquaries; and we are to trace from their use some common terms yet current among us. When a person is much elated, we say he is “IN A MERRY PIN,” which no doubt originally meant, he had reached that *mark* which had deprived him of his usual sedateness and sobriety: we talk of taking a man “A PEG LOWER,” when we imply we shall check him in any forwardness; a saying which originated from a regulation that deprived all those of their turn of drinking, *or of their Peg*, who had become troublesome in their liquor: from the like rule of society came also the expression of “HE IS A PEG TOO LOW,” *i. e.* has been restrained too far, when we say that a person is not in equal spirits with his company; while we also remark of an individual, that he is getting on “PEG BY PEG,” or, in other words, he is taking greater freedoms than he ought to do, which formerly meant, he was either drinking out of his turn, or, contrary to express regulation, did not confine himself to his proper portion, or *peg*, but drank into the *next*, thereby taking a double quantity.” Brady’s *Clavis Calendaria*, vol. ii. p. 322, 323. 1st edit.



Gray's-Inn. Many of the Masques of Ben Jonson were written for the amusement of the royal family on this night, and Dugdale in his *Origines Juridicales*, has given us a long and particular account of the revelry at the Temple on each of the twelve days of Christmas, in the year 1562. It appears from this document that the hospitable rites of St. Stephen's Day, St. John's Day, and Twelfth Day, were ordered to be exactly alike, and as many of them are, in their nature, perfectly rural, and were, there is every reason to suppose, observed, to a certain extent, in the halls of the country-gentry and substantial yeomanry, a short record here, of those that fall under this description, cannot be deemed inapposite.

The breakfast on Twelfth Day is directed to be of brawn, mustard, and malmsey; the dinner of two courses, to be served in the hall, and after the first course "cometh in the Master of the Game, appalled in green velvet: and the Ranger of the Forest also, in a green suit of satten; bearing in his hand a green bow and divers arrows, with either of them a hunting horn about their necks: blowing together three blasts of venery, they pace round about the fire three times. Then the Master of the Game maketh three curtesies," kneels down, and petitions to be admitted into the service of the Lord of the Feast.

"This ceremony performed, a huntsman cometh into the hall, with a fox and a purse-net; with a cat, both bound at the end of a staff; and with them nine or ten couple of hounds, with the blowing of hunting-horns. And the fox and cat are by the hounds set upon, and killed beneath the fire. This sport finished, the Marshal (an officer so called, who, with many others under different appellations, were created for the purpose of conducting the revels) placeth them in their several appointed places."

After the second course, the "antientest of the Masters of the Revels singeth a song, with the assistance of others there present;" and after some repose and revels, supper, consisting of two courses, is then served in the hall, and, being ended, "the Marshall presenteth him-



self with drums afore him, mounted upon a scaffold, born by four men; and goeth three times round about the harthe, crying out, aloud, 'A Lord, a Lord,' &c., then he descendeth, and goeth to dance."

"This done, the Lord of Misrule (an officer whose functions will be afterwards noticed) addresseth himself to the Banquet; which ended with some minstralsye, mirth and dancing, every man departeth to rest."\*

Herrick, who was the contemporary of Shakspeare for the first twenty-five years of his life, that is, from the year 1591 to 1616, has given us the following curious and pleasing account of the ceremonies of Twelfth Night, as we may suppose them to have been observed in almost every private family:

" TWELFTH-NIGHT,

OR KING AND QUEEN.

Now, now the mirth comes  
With the cake full of plums,  
Where Beane's the king of the sport here;  
Beside, we must know,  
The Pea also  
Must revell, as Queene, in the court here.

Begin then to chuse,  
This night as ye use,  
Who shall for the present delight here,  
Be a King by the lot,  
And who shall not  
Be Twelfe-day Queene for the night here.

Which knowne, let us make  
Joy-sops with the cake;  
And let not a man then be seen here,  
Who unurg'd will not drinke  
To the base from the brink  
A health to the King and the Queene here.

---

\* Nichols's Progresses of Elizabeth, vol. i. Entertainments at the Temple, &c. p.22. 24.

Next crowne the bowle full  
 With gentle lambs-wooll;  
 Adde sugar, nutmeg and ginger,  
 With store of ale too;  
 And thus ye must doe  
 To make the *wassaile* a swinger.

Give then to the King  
 And Queene wassailing;  
 And though with ale ye be whet here;  
 Yet part ye from hence,  
 As free from offence,  
 As when ye innocent met here." *Herrick's Hesperides*, p. 376, 377.

The *Twelfth Day* was the usual termination of the festivities of Christmas with the higher ranks; but with the vulgar they were frequently prolonged until Candlemas, to which period it was thought a point of much importance to retain a portion of their Christmas cheer.

It should not be forgotten here, that Shakspeare has given the appellation of *Twelfth Night* to one of his best and most finished plays. No reason for this choice is discoverable in the drama itself, and from its adjunctive title of *What You Will*, it is probable, that the name was meant to be no otherwise appropriate than as designating an evening on which dramatic mirth and recreation were, by custom, peculiarly expected and always acceptable. \*

\* The only rite that still lingers among us on the Twelfth Day, is the election of a King and Queen, a ceremony which is now usually performed by drawing tickets, and of which Mr. Brand, in his commentary on Bourne's *Antiquities of the Common People*, has extracted the subsequent detail from the *Universal Magazine* of 1774:—"I went to a Friend's house in the country to partake of some of those innocent pleasures that constitute a merry Christmas; I did not return till I had been present at drawing King and Queen, and eaten a *Slice* of the *Twelfth Cake*, made by the fair hands of my good Friend's Consort. After Tea Yesterday, a noble *Cake* was produced, and two *Bowls*, containing the *fortunate chances* for the different sexes. Our Host filled up the tickets; the whole company, except the King and Queen, were to be *Ministers of State*, *Maids of Honour*, or *Ladies of the Bed-chamber*.

"Our kind *Host* and *Hostess*, whether by design, or accident became King and Queen. According to *Twelfth-Day Law*, each party is to support their character till Mid-night. After supper one called for a *Kings Speech*, &c." *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, edit. of 1810, p. 228.



It appears from a passage from Warner's *Albion's England*, that between Twelfth Day and Plough-Monday, a period was customarily fixed upon for the celebration of games in honour of the Distaff, and which was termed *Rock-Day*.\* The notice in question is to be found in the lamentations of the Northerne-man over the decline of festivity, where he exclaims,

"*Rock, and plow-mondaies, gams sal gang,  
With saint-feasts and kirk sights.*"†

That this festival was observed not only during the immediate days of Warner and Shakspeare, but for some time afterwards, we learn from a little poem by Robert Herrick, which was probably written between the years 1630 and 1640. Herrick was born in 1591, and published his collection of poems, entitled *Hesperides*, in 1648. He gives us in his title the additional information that *Rock*, or *Saint Distaff's Day*, was the morrow after Twelfth Day; and he advises that it should terminate the sports of Christmas.

" SAINT DISTAFF'S OR THE MORROW AFTER  
TWELFTH-DAY.

Partly worke and partly play  
Ye must on *S. Distaff's day*:  
From the plough soone free your teame;  
Then come home and fother them.  
If the Maides a spinning goe,  
Burne the flax, and fire the tow:  
Scorch their plackets, but beware  
That ye singe no maiden-haire.

---

\* Dr. Johnson's definition of the word *Rock* in the sense of the text, is as follows:

" (*rock*, Danish; *rocca*, Italian; *rucca*, Spanish; *spinrock*, Dutch) A distaff held in the hand, from which the wool was spun by twirling a ball below." I shall add one of his illustrations:

" A learned and a manly soul  
I purpos'd her; that should with even powers,  
The *rock*, the spindle, and the sheers, controul  
Of destiny, and spin her own free hours. *Ben Jonson.*"

† Chalmers's *Poets*, vol. iv. p. 564. *Albion's England*, chap. 24.

Bring in pailles of water then,  
 Let the Maides bewash the men.  
 Give S. *Distaffe* all the right,  
 Then bid Christmas sport *good night*.  
 And next morrow, every one  
 To his owne vocation." \*

The first Monday after Twelfth Day used to be celebrated by the ploughmen as a Holiday, being the season at which the labours of the plough commenced, and hence the day has been denominated **Plough-Monday**. Tusser, in his poem on husbandry, after observing that the "old guise must be kept," recommends the ploughmen on this day to the hospitality of the good huswife :

" Good huswives, whom God hath enriched ynough,  
 forget not the feasts, that belong to the plough :  
 The meaning is only to joy and be glad,  
 for comfort with labour, is fit to be had."

He then adds,

" Plough-Munday, next after that Twelftide is past,  
 bids out with the plough, the worst husband is last :  
 If plowman get hatchet, or whip to the skreene,  
 maids loveth their cocke, if no water be scene."

These lines allude to a custom prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which Mr. Hilman, in a note on the passage, has thus explained: " After Christmas, (which formerly, during the twelve days, was a time of very little work,) every gentleman feasted the farmers, and every farmer their servants and task-men. *Plough-monday* puts them in mind of their business. In the morning the men and maid-servants strive who shall shew their diligence in rising earliest ; if the ploughman can get his whip, his plough-staff, hatchet, or any thing that he wants in the field, by the fire-side, before the maid hath got her kettle on, then the maid loseth her *Shrovetide* cock, and it wholly belongs to the men. Thus did our

\* *Hesperides*, p. 374.



forefathers strive to allure youth to their duty, and provided them innocent mirth, as well as labour. On this *Plough-Monday* they have a good supper and some strong drink, that they might not go immediately out of one extreme into another." \*

In the northern and north-western parts of England, the entire day was usually consumed in parading the streets, and the night was devoted to festivity. The ploughmen, apparently habited only in their shirts, but in fact with flannel jackets underneath, to keep out the cold, and these shirts decorated with rose-knots of various coloured riband, went about collecting what they called "*plough-money* for drink." They were accompanied by a plough, which they dragged along, and by music, and not unfrequently two of the party were dressed to personate an *old woman*, whom they called *Bessy*, and a *Fool*, the latter of these characters being covered with skins, with a hairy cap on his head, and the tail of some animal pendent from his back. On one of these antics was devolved the office of collecting money from the spectators by rattling a box, into which their contributions were dropped, while the rest of the ploughmen were engaged in performing a *sword-dance*, a piece of pageantry derived from our northern ancestors, and of which Olaus Magnus has left us an accurate description in his history of the Gothic nations. † It consisted, for the most part, in forming various figures with the swords, sheathed and unsheathed, commencing in slow time, and terminating in very rapid movements, which required great agility and address to be conducted with safety and effect. ‡

It was the opinion of Dr. Johnson that Shakspeare alluded to the

\* Tusser Redivivus, p. 79, 80.

† Olai Magni Gent. Septent. Breviar. p. 341.

‡ See Brand on Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares, p. 194; and Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, p. 307. edit. of 1810. Of this curious exhibition on *Plough-Monday*, I have often, during my boyhood, at York, been a delighted spectator, and, as far as I can now recollect, the above description appears to be an accurate detail of what took place.

*sword-dance*, where, in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, he makes his hero observe of Augustus, that

————— “ He, at Philippi, kept  
His sword even like a dancer.” \*

But Mr. Malone has remarked, with more probability, that the allusion is to the English custom of dancing with a sword *worn by the side*; in confirmation of which idea, he quotes a passage from *All's Well That Ends Well*, where Bertram, lamenting that he is kept from the wars, says,

“ I shall stay here the forſhorse to a smock,  
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,  
Till honour be bought up, and no *sword worn*,  
But one to *dance* with.” †

It has been observed in a preceding page, that, among the common people, the festivities of Christmas were frequently protracted to CANDLEMAS-DAY. This was done under the idea of doing honour to the Virgin Mary, whose *purification* is commemorated by the church at this period. It was generally, remarks Bourne, “ a day of festivity, and more than ordinary observation among women, and is therefore called the *Wives Feast-Day*.” ‡ The term *Candlemas*, however, seems to have arisen from a custom among the Roman Catholics, of consecrating tapers on this day, and bearing them about lighted in procession, to which they were enjoined by an edict of Pope Sergius, A.D. 684; but on what foundation is not accurately ascertained. At the Reformation, among the rites and ceremonies which were ordered to be retained in a convocation of Henry VIII., this is one, and expressly because it was considered as symbolical of the spiritual illumination of the Gospel. §

\* Act iii. sc. 9. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 171.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 172.

‡ Bourne's Antiquities apud Brand, p. 244.

§ Fuller's Church History, p. 222.



From Candlemas to Hallowmas, the tapers which had been lighted all the winter in Cathedral and Conventual Churches ceased to be used ; and so prevalent, indeed, was the relinquishment of candles on this day in domestic life, that it has laid the foundation of one of the proverbs in the collection of Mr. Ray :

*On Candlemas-day throw Candle and Candlestick away.*

On this day likewise the Christmas greens were removed from churches and private houses. Herrick, who may be considered as the contemporary of Shakspeare, being five-and-twenty at the period of the poet's death, has given us a pleasing description of this observance ; he abounds, indeed, in the history of local rites, and, though surviving beyond the middle of the seventeenth century, paints with great accuracy the manners and superstitions of the Shakspearean era. He has paid particular attention to the festival that we are describing, and enumerates the various greens and flowers appropriated to different seasons in a little poem entitled

“ CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMASSE EVE.

Down with the Rosemary and Bayes,  
Down with the Mistleto ;  
Instead of Holly, now up-raise  
The greener Box (for show).

The Holly hitherto did sway ;  
Let Box now domineere ;  
Untill the dancing Easter-day,  
On Easter's Eve appeare.

Then youthfull Box which now hath grace,  
Your houses to renew ;  
Grown old, surrender must his place,  
Unto the crisped Yew.

When Yew is out, then Birch comes in,  
 And many Flowers beside;  
 Both of a fresh and fragrant kinne,  
 To honour Whitsontide.

Green Bushes then, and sweetest Bents,  
 With cooler Oken boughs;  
 Come in for comely ornaments,  
 To re-adorn the house." \*

The usage which we have alluded to, of preserving the Christmas cheer and hospitality to Candlemas, is immediately afterwards recorded and connected with a singular superstition, in the following poems under the titles of

" CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMASSE DAY.

KINDLE the Christmas Brand, and then  
 Till sunne-set, let it burne;  
 Which quencht, then lay it up agen,  
 Till Christmas next returne.

Part must be kept wherewith to teend †  
 The Christmas Log next yeare;  
 And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend  
 Can do no mischief there. —

End now the white-loafe, and the pye,  
 And let all sporte with Christmas dye, ‡

To the exorcising power of the Christmas Brand is added, in the subsequent effusion, a most alarming denunciation against those who heedlessly leave in the Hall on Candlemas Eve, any the smallest portion of the Christmas greens,

\* Hesperides, p. 337. † *Teend*, to kindle.

‡ Hesperides, p. 337, 338.



“ CEREMONY UPON CANDLEMAS EVE.

Down with the Rosemary, and so  
Down with the Baies, and Mistletoe:  
Down with the Holly, Ivie, all  
Wherewith ye drest the Christmas Hall:  
That so the superstitious find  
No one least Branch there left behind:  
For look, how many leaves there be,  
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,  
So many *goblins* you shall see.” \*

The next important period of feasting in the country occurred at SHROVE-TIDE, which among the Roman Catholics was the time appointed for *shriving* or *confession of sins*, and was also observed as a *carnival* before the commencement of Lent. The former of these ceremonies was dispensed with at the Reformation; but the rites attending the latter were for a long time supported with a rival spirit of hilarity. The Monday and Tuesday succeeding *Shrove Sunday*, called *Collop Monday* and *Pancake Tuesday*, were peculiarly devoted to *Shrovetide Amusement*; the first having been, in papal times, the period at which they took leave of flesh, or slices of meat, termed *collops* in the north, which had been preserved through the winter by salting and drying, and the second was a relic of the feast preceding Lent; eggs and collops therefore on the Monday, and pancakes, as a delicacy, on the Tuesday, were duly if not religiously served up.

\* *Hesperides*, p. 361. Dramatic amusements were frequent on this day, as well in the halls of the nobility in the country, as at court. With regard to their exhibition in the latter, many documents exist; for instance, in a chronological series of Queen Elizabeth's payments for plays acted before her (from the Council Registers) is the following entry:

“ 18th March, 1573-4. To Richard Mouncaster, (Mulcaster, the Grammarian,) for two plays presented before her on Candlemas-day and Shrove-tuesday last, 20 marks.” †

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, vide life of Richard Mulcaster, May, June, and July, 1800.

Tusser, in his very curious and entertaining poem on agriculture, thus notices some of the old observances at *Shrovetide* : —

“ At Shroftide to shroving, go thresh the fat hen,  
If blindfold can kill her, then give it thy men :  
Maids, fritters and pancakes, ynow see ye make,  
Let slut have one pancake, for company sake.”

For an explanation of the obsolete custom of “ threshing the fat hen,” we are indebted to Mr. Hilman. “ The hen,” says he, “ is hung at a fellow’s back, who has also some horse-bells about him ; the rest of the fellows are blinded, and have boughs in their hands, with which they chase this fellow and his hen about some large court or small enclosure. The fellow with his hen and bells shifting as well as he can, they follow the sound, and sometimes hit him and his hen ; at other times, if he can get behind one of them, they thresh one another well favour’dly ; but the jest is, the maids are to blind the fellows, which they do with their aprons, and the cunning baggages will endear their sweet-hearts with a peeping hole, whilst the others look out as sharp to hinder it. After this the hen is boil’d with bacon, and store of pancakes and fritters are made. She that is noted for lying in bed long, or any other miscarriage, hath the first pancake presented to her, which most commonly falls to the dogs share at last, for no one will own it their due.” Mr. Hilman concludes his comment on the text with a singular remark ; “ the loss of the above laudable custom, is one of the benefits we have got by smoaking tobacco.” \*

Shakspeare has twice noticed this season of feasting and amusement ; first, in *All’s Well That Ends Well*, where he makes the Clown tell the Countess (among a string of other similes), that his

\* Hilman’s *Tusser*, p. 80. Mr. Hilman seems to have had as great an aversion to tobacco as King James ; for, in another part of his notes, he observes, that “ *Suffolk* and *Essex* were the counties wherein our author was a farmer, and no where are better dairies for butter, and neater housewives than there, if too many of them at present do not smoke tobacco.” p. 49.



answer is "as fit as a pancake for Shrove-tuesday \*;" and in the *Second Part of King Henry IV.* he has introduced *Silence* singing the following song: —

" Be merry, be merry, my wife's as all; †  
For women are shrews, both short and tall:  
'Tis merry in hall, when beards wag all,  
And welcome merry *shrove-tide*.  
Be merry, be merry, &c."

The third line of this song appears to have been proverbial, and of considerable antiquity; for Adam Davie, who flourished about 1312, has the same imagery with the same rhyme, in his *Life of Alexander*:

" Merry swithe it is in halle,  
When the *berdes waveth alle*." ‡

And the subsequent passage, quoted by Mr. Reed from a writer contemporary with Shakspeare, proves, that it was a common burden or under song in the halls of our gentry at that period: — " which done, grace said, and the table taken up, the plate presently conveyed into the pantrie, the hall summons this consort of companions (upon

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 272, 273. Act ii. sc. 2. Warner has also noticed this culinary article as appropriated to Shrove-Tuesday in his *Albion's England*, chapter xxiv., where, enumerating the feasts and holidays of his time, he says, they had

" At fasts-eve pan-puffes." —

*Chalmers's Poets*, vol. iv. p. 564.

*Shrove* or *Pancake Tuesday*, is still called, in the North, *Fastens*, or *Fasterns E'en*, as preceding *Ash-Wednesday*, the first day of Lent; and the turning of these cakes in the pan is yet observed as a feat of dexterity and skill.

Of the *pancake-bell* which used to be rung on Shrove-Tuesday, Taylor, the Water Poet, has given us the following most singular account: — " Shrove-Tuesday, at whose entrance in the morning all the whole kingdom is unquiet, but by that time the clocke strikes eleven, which (by the help of a knavish sexton) is commonly before nine, then there is a bell rung, cal'd *pancake-bell*, the sound whereof makes thousands of people distracted, and forgetful either of manners or humanitie." See his *Works*, folio, 1630. p. 115.

† — *my wife's as all* ;] i. e. as all women are. Farmer.

‡ Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 225. note (p).



payne to dyne with Duke Humphrie, or to kisse the hare's foot,) to appear at the first call: where a song is to be sung, the under song or holding whereof is, *It is merrie in haul where beards wag all.*" The Serving-man's Comfort, 1598, sign. C. \*

The evening of *Shrove-Tuesday* was usually appropriated, as well in the country as in town, to the exhibition of dramatic pieces. Not only at Court, where Jonson was occasionally employed to write Masques on this night †, but at both the Universities, in the provincial schools, and in the halls of the gentry and nobility, were these the amusements of *Shrovetide*, during the days of Elizabeth and James. Warton, speaking of these ephemeral plays, adds, in a note, "I have seen an anonymous comedy, *APOLLO SHROVING*, composed by the Master of Hadleigh-school, in Suffolk ‡, and acted by his scholars, on Shrove-tuesday, Feb. 7, 1626, printed 1627. 8vo. published, as it seems, by E. W. *Shrove-tuesday*, as the day immediately preceding Lent, was always a day of extraordinary sport and feasting. — "Some of these festivities," he proceeds to say, "still remain in our universities. In the PERCY HOUSEHOLD-BOOK, 1512, it appears, that the clergy and officers of Lord Percy's chapel performed a play *before his lordship upon Shrowftewesday at night.*" Pag. 345. §

The cruel custom of *Cock-throwing*, which, until lately, was a diversion peculiar to this day, seems to have originated from the barbarous,

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 235.

† See his Masque on the Shrove-tuesday at night 1608, and Chloridia, a Masque, at Shrove-tide, 1630.

‡ The author of *Apollo Shroving* was *William Hawkins*, who likewise published "*Corolla varia contexta per Guil. Haukinum scholarcham Hadleianum in agro Suffolcienci. Cantabr. ap. Tho. Buck.*" 12mo. 1634.

It may be observed, that *Shrove-Tuesday* was considered by the apprentices as their peculiar holiday; and it appears that in the days of Shakspeare, they claimed a right of punishing, at this season, women of ill-fame. To these customs Dekker and Sir Thomas Overbury allude, when the former says: "They presently (like Prentises upon Shrove-Tuesday) take the lawe into their owne handes and do what they list." Seven Deadly Sinnes of London, 4to. p. 35. 1606. And when the latter, in his Characters, speaking of a bawd, remarks: "Nothing daunts her so much as the approach of Shrove-Tuesday;" and describing a "roaring boy," adds, "he is a supervisor of brothels, and in them is a more unlawful reformer of vice than prentices on Shrove-Tuesday."

§ History of English Poetry, vol. ii. p. 387.



yet less savage, amusement of *Cock-fighting*. "Every yeare on *Shrove-Tuesday*," says Fitzstephen, who wrote in the reign of Henry II., "the schoole-boyes doe bring cockes of the game to their master, and all the forenoone they delight themselves in Cock-fighting." \* At what period this degenerated into Cock-throwing cannot now be ascertained; Chaucer seems to allude to it in his *Nonnes Priests' Tale*, where the Cock revenges himself on the Priest's son, because he

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"gave hym a knocke  
Upon his legges, when he was yonge and nice;"

and that it was common in the sixteenth century, we have the testimony of Sir Thomas More, who, describing the state of childhood, speaks of his skill in casting a *cok-stele*, that is, a stick or cudgel to throw at a cock. †

The first effective blow directed against this infamous sport, was given by the moral pencil of Hogarth, who in one of his prints called *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, has represented, among other puerile diversions, a groupe of boys *throwing at a Cock*, and, as Trusler remarks, "beating the harmless feathered animal to jelly." ‡ The benevolent satire of this great artist gradually produced the necessary reform, and for some time past, the magistrates have so generally interdicted the practice, that the pastime may happily be considered as extinct. §

\* Stow's Survey of London, edit. of 1618, p. 142.

† Vide Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 250.

‡ Vide Hogarth Moralized, p. 134.

§ "In some places," says Mr. Strutt, "it was a common practice to put the cock into an earthen vessel made for the purpose, and to place him in such a position that his head and tail might be exposed to view; the vessel, with the bird in it, was then suspended across the street, about twelve or fourteen feet from the ground, to be thrown at by such as chose to make trial of their skill; two-pence was paid for four throws, and he who broke the pot, and delivered the cock from his confinement, had him for a reward. At North-Walsham, in Norfolk, about forty years ago, some wags put an owl into one of these vessels; and having procured the head and tail of a dead cock, they placed them in the same position as if they had appertained to a living one; the deception was successful; and at last, a labouring man belonging to the town, after several fruitless attempts, broke the pot, but missed his prize; for the owl being set at liberty, instantly flew away, to his great



EASTER-TIDE, or the week succeeding Easter-Sunday, afforded another opportunity for rejoicing, and was formerly a season of great festivity. Not only, as bound by every tie of gratitude to do, did man rejoice on this occasion, but it was the belief of the vulgar that the sun himself partook of the exhilaration, and regularly danced on Easter-Day. To see this glorious spectacle, therefore, it was customary for the common people to rise before the sun on Easter-morning, and though, as we may conclude, they were constantly disappointed, yet might the habit occasionally lead to serious thought and useful contemplation; metaphorically considered, indeed, the idea may be termed both just and beautiful, "for as the earth and her valleys standing thick with corn, are said *to laugh and sing*; so, on account of the Resurrection, the heavens and the sun may be said to dance for joy; or, as the Psalmist words it, the *heavens may rejoice and the earth may be glad.*"\*

The great amusement of the Easter-holidays consisted in playing at hand-ball, a game at which, say the ritualists Belithus and Durandus,

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astonishment, and left him nothing more than the head and tail of the dead bird, with the potsherds, for his money and his trouble; this ridiculous adventure exposed him to the continual laughter of the town's people, and obliged him to quit the place, to which I am told he returned no more." Sports and Pastimes, p. 251.

"For many years," observes Mr. Brady, "our public diaries, and monthly publications, took infinite pains to impress upon the minds of the populace a just abhorrence of such barbarities (cock-fighting and cock-throwing); and, by way of strengthening their arguments, they failed not to detail in the most pathetic terms the following fact, which for the interest it contains is here transcribed, from the Obituary of the Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1789. 'Died, April 4th, at Tottenham, JOHN ARDESOIF, esquire, a young man of large fortune, and in the splendour of his horses and carriages, rivalled by few country-gentlemen. His table was that of hospitality, where it may be said he sacrificed too much to conviviality. *Mr. Ardesoif* was very fond of cock-fighting, and had a favourite cock upon which he had won many profitable matches. The last bet he laid upon this cock he lost, which so enraged him, that he had the bird tied to a spit, and roasted alive before a large fire. The screams of the miserable animal were so affecting, that some gentlemen who were present attempted to interfere, which so enraged *Mr. Ardesoif*, that he seized a poker, and with the most furious vehemence declared, that he would kill the first man who interfered: but in the midst of his passionate asseverations, *he fell down dead upon the spot.*' Clavis Calendaria, 1st edit. vol. i. p. 200, 201."

\* Bourne's Antiquities apud Brand, p. 268.



bishops and archbishops used, upon the continent at this period, to recreate themselves with their inferior clergy\* ; nor was it uncommon for corporate bodies on this occasion in England to amuse themselves in a similar way with their burgesses and young people ; antiently this was the custom, says Mr. Brand, at Newcastle, at the feasts of Easter and Whitsuntide, when the mayor, aldermen, and sheriff, accompanied by great numbers of the burgesses, used to go yearly at these seasons to the Forth, or little mall of the town, with the mace, sword, and cap of maintenance carried before them, and not only countenance, but frequently join in the diversions of hand-ball, dancing, &c. †

The constant prize at hand-ball, during Easter, was a *tansy-cake*, supposed to be allusive to the *bitter herbs* used by the Jews on this festival. Selden, the contemporary of Shakspeare, speaking of our chief holidays, remarks, that “ our Meats and Sports have much of them relation to Church-Works. The coffin of our *Christmas Pies*, in shape long, is in imitation of the Cratch ‡: our chusing Kings and Queens on Twelfth Night, hath reference to the three kings. So likewise our eating of fritters, *whipping* of tops, *roasting* of herrings, Jack of Lents, &c. they are all in imitation of Church-Works, emblems of martyrdom. Our *Tansies at Easter* have reference to the *bitter Herbs* ; though at the same time ’twas always the fashion for a man to have a *Gammon of Bacon*, to shew himself to be no Jew.” §

\* Bourne’s Antiquities apud Brand, p. 277. “ Why they should play at *Hand Ball* at this time,” observes Mr. Bourne, “ rather than any other game, I have not been able to find out, but I suppose it will readily be granted, that this custom of so playing, was the original of our present recreations and diversions on Easter Holy Days,” p. 277.

† Brand on Bourne, p. 280. note. The *morris dance*, of which such frequent mention is made in our old poets, was frequently performed at Easter ; but, as we shall have occasion to notice this amusement, at some length, under the article “ May-Day,” we shall here barely notice that Warner has recorded it as an Easter diversion in the following line:

“ At *Paske begun* our *morrise* : and ere Penticost our May.”

*Albion’s England*, Chap. xxiv.

‡ *Rack* or *Manger*.

§ Selden’s Table-Talk, art. Christmas.



Fuller has noticed this Easter game under his Cheshire, where, explaining the origin of the proverb "When the daughter is stolen shut Pepper Gate," he says, "The mayor of the city had his daughter, as she was *playing at ball* with other maidens in Pepper-street, stolen away by a young man through the same gate, whereupon he caused it to be shut up." \*

Another custom which prevailed in this country, during the sixteenth century, at Easter, and is still kept up in some parts of the north, was that of presenting children with *eggs stained with various colours in boiling*, termed *Paste* or more properly *Pasche Eggs*, which the young people considered in the light of *fairings*. This observance appears to have arisen from a superstition, prevalent among the Roman Catholics, that eggs were an emblem of the resurrection, and, indeed, in the Ritual of Pope Paul the Fifth, which was composed for the use of England, Ireland, and Scotland, there is a prayer for the consecration of eggs, in which the faithful servants of the Lord are directed to eat this his creature of eggs *on account of the resurrection*. On this custom Mr. Brand has well observed, that "the antient Egyptians, if the resurrection of the body had been a tenet of their faith, would perhaps have thought an *Egg* no improper hieroglyphical representation of it. The exclusion of a living creature by incubation, after the vital principle has lain a long while dormant or extinct, is a process so truly marvellous, that if it could be disbelieved, would be thought by some a thing as incredible, as that the Author of *Life* should be able to re-animate the *dead*." † So prevalent indeed was this custom of *egg-giving* at Easter, that it forms the basis of an old English proverb, which, in the collection of Mr. Ray, runs thus :

"I'll warrant you for an *egg* at *Easter*." ‡

\* Fuller's Worthies, p. 188.

† Bourne apud Brand, p. 346.

‡ The following whimsical custom, relates Mr. Brand, "is still retained at the city of Durham on these holidays. On one day the men take off the women's shoes, which are only to be redeem'd by a present; on another day the women take off the men's in like manner." Bourne apud Brand, p. 282.



A popular holiday, called HOKE-DAY, or HOCK-DAY, which used to be celebrated with much festivity in Shakspeare's native county, was usually observed on the Tuesday following the second Sunday after Easter-day. Its origin is doubtful, some antiquaries supposing it was commemorative of the massacre of the Danes in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, which took place on the 13th of November 1002; and others that it was meant to perpetuate the deliverance of the English from the tyrannical government of the Danes, by the death of Hardicanute on Tuesday the 8th of June 1041. At Coventry in Warwickshire, however, it was celebrated in memory of the former event, though the commemoration was held on a day wide apart from that on which the catastrophe occurred, a circumstance which originated in an ordinance of Ethelred himself, who transferred the sports of this day to the Monday and Tuesday in the third week after Easter. John Rouse, or Ross, the Warwickshire historian, says, that this day was distinguished by various sports, in which the people, divided into parties, used to draw each other by ropes \*; a species of diversion of which Spelman has given us a more intelligible account by telling us that it "consisted in the men and women binding each other, and especially the women the men," and that the day, in consequence of this pastime, was called *Binding-Tuesday*. †

The term *hock*, by which this day is designated, is thus accounted for by Henry of Huntingdon. "The secret letters of Ethelred, directed to all parts of his kingdom from this city (Winchester), ordered that all the Danes indiscriminately should be put to death; and this was executed, as we learn from the chronicle of Wallingford, with circumstances of the greatest cruelty, even upon women and

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Stow also records, that in the week before Easter there were "great shewes made, for the fetching in of a twisted tree, or With,' as they tearmed it, out of the Woods into the King's house, and the like into every man's house of Honor or Worship," p. 150.; but whether this was general throughout the kingdom, is not mentioned.

\* Vide Ross, as published by Hearne, p. 105.

† Spelman's Glossary, under the title Hock-day.



children, in many parts : but in other places, it seems that the English, instead of killing their guests, satisfied themselves with what was called *hock-shining*, or *houghing* them, by cutting their ham-strings, so as to render them incapable of serving in war. Hence the sports which were afterwards instituted in our city, and from thence propagated throughout the whole kingdom, obtained the name of *Hocktide merriments*."

It appears from the following passage in Laneham's Account of Queen Elizabeth's Entertainment at Kenelworth Castle, A. D. 1575, that the citizens of Coventry had lately been compelled to give up their annual amusements on *Hock Tuesday*, and took the opportunity of the queen's visit to the Earl of Leicester to petition her for a renewal of the same. "Hereto followed," says Laneham, "as good a sport (methought), presented in an historical cue, by certain good-hearted men of *Coventry*, my Lord's neighbours there; who understanding among them the thing that could not be hidden from any, how careful and studious his Honour was that by all pleasant recreations her Highness might best find herself welcome, and be made gladsome and merry (the groundwork indeed and foundation of his Lordship's mirth and gladness of us all), made petition that they mought renew now their old storial shew: Of argument how the *Danes*, whylome here in a troublous season were for quietness borne withal and suffered in peace; that anon, by outrage and importable insolency, abusing both *Ethelred* the King, then, and all Estates every where beside; at the grievous complaint and counsel of *Huna* the King's chieftain in wars on a *Saint Brice's* night, A. D. 1012 (as the book says, that falleth yearly on the thirteenth of November) were all dispatched, and the realm rid. And for because the matter mentioneth how valiantly our *English* women for love of their country behaved themselves, expressed in actions and rymes after their manner, they thought it mought move some mirth to her Majesty the rather. The thing, said they, is grounded on story, and for pastime wont to be played in our city yearly; without ill example of manners, papistry, or any superstition; and else did so occupy the heads of a number, that likely



enough would have had worse meditations; had an ancient beginning and a long continuance; till now of late laid down, they knew no cause why, unless it were by the zeal of certain their preachers, men very commendable for their behaviour and learning, and sweet in their sermons, but somewhat too sour in preaching away their pastime: Wished therefore, that as they should continue their good doctrine in pulpit, so, for matters of policy and governance of the city, they would permit them to the *Mayor and Magistrates*; and said, by my faith, *Master Martyn, they would make their humble petition unto her Highness, that they might have their Plays up again.*" \*

As it is subsequently stated that their play was very graciously received by the queen, who commanded it to be represented again on the following Tuesday, and gave the performers two bucks, and five marks in money, we must suppose, that their petition was not rejected, and that they were allowed to renew yearly at Coventry, their favourite diversions on *Hock-Tuesday*. The observance of this day, indeed, was still partially retained in the time of Spelman, who died A.D. 1641 †, and even Plott, who lived until 1696, mentions it then as not totally discontinued; but the eighteenth century, we believe, never witnessed its celebration.

We have now reached that period of the year which was formerly dedicated to one of the most splendid and pleasing of our festal rites.

\* Nichols's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. Laneham's Letter, p. 32—34.

† That Hock-tide was *generally* observed in the days of Shakspeare, is evident from the following passage in Withers's "Abuses Stript and Whipt." 8vo. London. 1618.

" Who think (forsooth) because that once a yeare  
They can afford the poore some slender cheere,  
Observe their country feasts, or common doles,  
And entertaine their Christmass Wassaile Boles,  
Or els because that, *for the Churche's good,*  
*They in defence of HOCKTIDE custome stood:*  
A Whitsun-ale, or some such goodly motion,  
The better to procure young men's devotion:  
What will they do, I say, that think to please  
Their mighty God with such fond things as these?  
Sure, very ill. P. 232.



The observance of MAY-DAY was a custom which, until the close of the reign of James the First, alike attracted the attention of the royal and the noble, as of the vulgar class. Henry the Eighth, Elizabeth, and James, patronized and partook of its ceremonies; and, during this extended era, there was scarcely a village in the kingdom but what had a *May-pole*, with its appropriate games and dances.

The origin of these festivities has been attributed to three different sources, *Classic*, *Celtic*, and *Gothic*. The first appears to us to establish the best claim to the parentage of our May-day rites, as a relique of the *Roman Floralia*, which were celebrated on the last four days of April, and on the first of May, in honour of the goddess Flora, and were accompanied with dancing, music, the wearing of garlands, strewing of flowers, &c. The *Beltein*, or rural sacrifice of the Highlanders on this day, as described by Mr. Pennant and Dr. Jamieson\*, seems to have arisen from a different motive, and to have been instituted for the purpose of propitiating the various noxious animals which might injure or destroy their flocks and herds. The Gothic anniversary on May-day makes a nearer approach to the general purpose of the *Floralia*, and was intended as a thanksgiving to the sun, if not for the return of flowers, fruit, and grain, yet for the introduction of a better season for fishing and hunting. †

The modes of conducting the ceremonies and rejoicings on *May-day*, may be best drawn from the writers of the Elizabethan period, in which this festival appears to have maintained a very high degree of celebrity, though not accompanied with that splendour of exhibition which took place at an earlier period in the reign of Henry the Eighth. It may be traced, indeed, from the era of Chaucer, who, in the conclusion of his *Court of Love*, has described the *Feast of May*, when

\* Vide Pennant's *Scotland*, p. 91.; and Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*.

† Olaus Magnus *de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, lib. xv. c. 8.



“ ——— Forth goth all the court both most and lest,  
 To fetch the floures fresh, and braunch and blome —  
 And namely hauthorn brought both page and grome  
 And than rejoyssen in their great delite:  
 Eke ech at other throw the floures bright,  
 The primerose, the violete, and the gold.  
 With fresh garlants party blew and white.” \*

And, it should be observed, that this, the simplest mode of celebrating May-day, was as much in vogue, in the days of Shakspeare, as the more complex one, accompanied by the morris-dance, and the games of Robin Hood. The following descriptions, by Bourne and Borlase, manifestly allude to the costume of this age, and to the simpler mode of commemorating the 1st of May: “ On the *Calends*, or the 1st day of May,” says the former, “ commonly called *May-day*, the juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight, and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompany’d with music, and the blowing of horns, where they break down branches from the trees, and adorn them with *nosegays* and *crowns of flowers*. When this is done, they return with their booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph in the flowery spoil. The after part of the day, is chiefly spent in dancing round a tall poll, which is called a *May Poll*; which being placed in a convenient part of the village, stands there, as it were consecrated to the *Goddess of Flowers*, without the least violence offered it, in the whole circle of the year.” † “ An antient custom,” says the latter, “ still retained by the Cornish, is that of decking their doors and porches on the first of May with green sycamore and hawthorn boughs, and of planting trees, or rather stumps of trees, before their houses: and on May-eve, they from towns make excursions into the country, and having cut down a tall elm, brought it into town, fitted a straight and taper pole to the end of it, and painted

\* Chalmers’s English Poets, vol. i. p. 378.

† Bourne’s *Antiquitates Vulgares* apud Brand, p. 283.

the same, erect it in the most public places, and on holidays and festivals adorn it with flower garlands, or insigns and streamers." \*

Now both these passages are little more than a less extended account of what Philip Stubbes was a witness of, and described, in the year 1595, in his puritanical work, entitled *The Anatomie of Abuses*. "Against Maie-day," relates this vehement declaimer, "every parish, towne, or village, assemble themselves, both men, women, and children; and either all together, or dividing themselves into companies, they goe some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountaines, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return bringing with them, birche boughes and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is the maie-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus—they have twentie or fortie yoake of oxen, every oxe having a sweete nosegaie of flowers tied to the tip of his hornes, and these oxen drawe home the maie-poale, their stinking idol rather, which they covered all over with flowers and hearbes, bound round with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometimes it was painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great devotion. And thus equipp'd it was reared with handkerchiefes and flagges streaming on the top, they strawe the ground round about it, they bind green boughs about it, they set up summer halles, bowers, and arbours, hard by it, and then fall they to banquetting and feasting, to leaping and dauncing about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolls. — I have heard it crediblie reported," he sarcastically adds, "by men of great gravity, credite, and reputation, that of fourtie, three score, or an hundred maides going to the wood, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home againe as they went." †

\* Vide Borlase's Natural History of Cornwall, &c.

† Stubbes's Anatomie of Abuses, p. 109. edit. 1595, 4to.



Browne also has given a similar description of the May-day rites in his *Britannia's Pastorals* : —

“ As I have seene the Lady of the May  
Set in an arbour ———  
Built by the May-pole, where the jocund swaines  
Dance with the maidens to the bagpipe's straines,  
When envious night commands them to be gone,  
Call for the merry yongsters one by one,  
And for their well performance some disposes,  
To this a garland interwove with roses;  
To that a carved hooke, or well-wrought scrip,  
Gracing another with her cherry lip :  
To one her garter, to another then  
A handkerchiefe cast o're and o're agen;  
And none returneth empty, that hath spent  
His paynes to fill their rurall merriment.” \*

The custom of rising early on a May-morning to enjoy the season, and honour the day, is thus noticed by Stow:—“ In the month of May,” he says, “ namely, on May-day in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walke into the sweete meddowes and green woods, there to rejoyce their spirits, with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praying God in their kind †;” and Shakspeare has repeated references to the same observance; in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Lysander tells Hermia,

—— “ I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To do observance to a morn of May;” ‡

and again, in the same play, Theseus says,—

\* Book ii. Song 4. Chalmers's Poets, vol. vi. p. 296.— It was no uncommon thing also for the milk-maids to join the procession to the May-pole on this day, leading a cow decorated with ribands of various colours, intermingled with knots of flowers, and wreathes of oaken leaves, and with the horns of the animal gilt.

† Stow's Survey of London, p. 150. 1618.

‡ Act i. sc. 1. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 327.

" No doubt they rose up early, to observe  
The rite of May." \*

So generally prevalent was this habit of early rising on May-day, that Shakspeare makes one of his inferior characters in *King Henry the Eighth* exclaim, —

" Pray, sir, be patient; 'tis as much impossible  
(Unless we sweep them from the door with cannons)  
To scatter them, as 'tis to make them sleep  
On May-day morning; which will never be." †

Herrick, the minute describer of the customs and superstitions of his times, which were those of Shakspeare, and the *immediately* succeeding period, has a poem called *Corinna's Going A Maying*, which includes most of the circumstances hitherto mentioned; he thus addresses his mistress:—

" Get up —— and see  
The dew bespangling herbe and tree:  
Each flower has wept, and bow'd toward the east,  
Above an houre since; — it is sin,  
Nay profanation to keep in;

\* Act iv. sc. 1. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 452, 453. — " The rite of this month," observes Mr. Steevens, " was once so universally observed, that even authors thought their works would obtain a more favourable reception, if published on *May-day*. The following is a title-page to a metrical performance by a once celebrated poet, Thomas Churchyard :

' Come bring in *Maye* with me,  
My *Maye* is fresh and greene;  
A subjectes harte, an humble mind,  
To serve a mayden Queene.

' A discourse of rebellion, drawne forth for to warne the wanton wittes how to kepe their heads on their shoulders.

' Imprinted at London, in Flete-streat by William Griffith, Anno Domini 1570. The *first of Maye*."

† Act v. sc. 3. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 201.



When as a thousand virgins on this day,  
 Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May!  
 Come, my Corinna, come; and comming marke  
 How each field turns a street, each street a parke  
 Made green, and trimm'd with trees; see how  
 Devotion gives each house a bough,  
 Or branch: each porch, each doore, ere this,  
 An arke, a tabernacle is  
 Made up of white-thorn neatly enterwove. —

There's not a budding boy, or girle, this day  
 But is got up, and gone to bring in May:  
 A deale of youth, ere this, is come  
 Back, and with white-thorn laden home.  
 Some have dispatcht their cakes and creame,  
 Before that we have left to dreame:  
 And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,  
 And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:  
 Many a green gown has been given;  
 Many a kisse, both odde and even:  
 Many a glance too has been sent  
 From out the eye, Love's firmament:  
 Many a jest told of the keyes betraying  
 This night, and locks pickt, ye w'are not a Maying!" \*

With this, the simplest mode of celebrating the rites of May-day, was frequently united, in the days of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, a groupe of *Morris Dancers*, consisting of several characters, which were often varied both in number, appellation, and dress. The *Morris Dance* appears to have been introduced into this kingdom about the reign of Edward the Fourth, and is, without doubt, derived from the *Morisco*, a dance peculiar to the *Moors*, and generally termed the *Spanish Morisco*, from its notoriety in Spain, during the dynasty of that people in the peninsula. The *Morris Dance* in this country, when performed on a May-day, and not connected with the Games of Robin Hood, usually consisted of the Lady of the May, the Fool, or domestic buffoon of the 15th and 16th centuries, a Piper, and two, four, or more, *Morris Dancers*. The dress of these

\* Herrick's *Hesperides*, p. 74, 75.

last personages, who designated the amusement, was of a very peculiar kind; they had their faces blackened to resemble the native Moors, and "in the reign of Henry the Eighth," says Mr. Douce, "they were dressed in gilt leather and silver paper, and sometimes in coats of white spangled fustian. They had purses at their girdles, and garters to which bells were attached\*;" but according to Stubbes, who wrote in 1595, the costume had been altered, for he tells us that they were clothed in "greene, yellow, or some other light wanton collour. And as though that were not gawdy ynough," he continues, "they bedeeke themselves with scarffes, ribbons, and laces hanged all over with golde ringes, precious stones, and other jewels: this done, they tie about either legge twentie or fourtie belles, with rich handkerchiefe in their handes, and sometimes laide a crosse over their shoulders and neckes borrowed for the most part of their pretie *Mopsies* and loving *Bessies* for bussing them in the darke." † Feathers, too, were usually worn in their hats, and they had occasionally bells fixed on their arms or wrists, as well as on their legs. That these jingling ornaments were characteristic of, and derived from, the genuine *Moorish Dance*, appears from a plate copied by Mr. Douce from the habits of various nations, published by Hans Weigel at Nuremberg, in 1577, and which represents the figure of an African lady of the kingdom of Fez in the act of dancing, with bells at her feet. ‡

It was the business of these motley figures to dance round the May-pole, which was painted of various colours; thus in Mr. Tollett's painted glass window, at Betley in Staffordshire, which represents an English May-game and morris-dance, the May-pole is stained yellow and black, in spiral lines §; and Shakspeare, in allusion to this custom, makes Hermia tell Helena, whilst ridiculing the tallness of her form, that she is a "painted May-pole ||;" so Stubbes, likewise, in a

\* Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 473.

† Anatomie of Abuses, p. 107.

‡ Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 474.

§ Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 440.

|| Midsummer-Night's Dream, act iii. sc. 2. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 427.



passage previously quoted, says, that the Maie-pole was “ painted with variable colours.”

That the *morris-dance* was an almost constant attendant on the May-day festivities, may be drawn from our usual authority, the works of Shakspeare ; for, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, the Clown affirms, that his answer will serve all questions

“ As fit as a morris for May-day.” \*

But, about the commencement of the sixteenth century, or somewhat sooner, probably towards the middle of the fifteenth century, a very material addition was made to the celebration of the rites of May-day, by the introduction of the characters of Robin Hood and some of his associates. This was done with a view towards the encouragement of archery, and the custom was continued even beyond the close of the reign of James I. It is true, that the May-games in their rudest form, the mere dance of lads and lasses round a May-pole, or the simple morris with the Lady of the May, were occasionally seen during the days of Elizabeth ; but the general exhibition was the more complicated ceremony which we are about to describe.

The personages who now became the chief performers in the *morris-dance*, were four of the most popular outlaws of Sherwood forest ; that Robin Hood, of whom Drayton says, —

“ In this our spacious isle, I think there is not one,  
But he hath heard some talk of him and little John ; —  
Of Tuck the merry friar, which many a sermon made  
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws and their trade ; —  
“ Of Robin's” mistress dear, his loved Marian,  
—— ——— which wheresoe'er she came,  
Was sovereign of the woods, chief lady of the game :  
Her clothes tuck'd to the knee, and dainty braided hair,  
With bow and quiver arm'd ;” †

characters which Warner, the contemporary of Drayton and Shakspeare, has exclusively recorded as celebrating the rites of May ; for,

\* Act ii. sc. 2. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 273.

† Drayton's Poly-Olbion, Song 26. Chalmers's Poets, vol. iv. p. 373, 374.

speaking of the periods of some of our festivals, and remarking that "ere pentecost begun our May," he adds,

"Tho' (*then*) Robin Hood, liell John, frier Tucke,  
And Marian, deftly play,  
And lord and ladie gang till kirke  
With lads and lasses gay :

Fra masse and een sang sa gud cheere  
And glee on ery greene." \*

These four characters, therefore, *Robin Hood*, *Little John*, *Friar Tuck*, and *Maid Marian*, although no constituent parts of the original English morris, became at length so blended with it, especially on the festival of May-day, that until the practice of archery was nearly laid aside, they continued to be the most essential part of the pageantry.

In consequence of this arrangement, "the old *Robin Hood* of England," as Shakspeare calls him †, was created the King or Lord of the May, and sometimes carried in his hand, during the May-game, a painted standard. ‡ It was no uncommon circumstance, likewise, for metrical interludes, of a comic species, and founded on the achievements of this outlaw, to be performed after the morris, on the May-pole green. In Garrick's Collection of Old Plays, occurs one, entitled "A mery Geste of Robyn Hoode, and of hys Lyfe, wyth a newe Playe for to be played in *Maye-Games*, very pleasaunte and full of pastyme;" it is printed at London, in the black letter, for William Copland, and has figures in the title page of Robin Hood and Lytel John. § Shakspeare appears to allude to these interludes when he represents Fabian, in the *Twelfth Night*, exclaiming on the approach of Sir Andrew Ague-Cheek with his challenge, "More matter for May-morning." ||

\* Warner's Albion's England, chapter 24. Chalmers's Poets, vol. iv. p. 564.

† As You Like It, act i. sc. 1. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 13.

‡ Lysons's Environs of London, vol. i. p. 227.

§ Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature and scarce Books, vol. i. p. 401.

|| Act iii. sc. 4. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 364.



Upon this introduction of Robin Hood and his companions into the celebration of May-day, his paramour *Maid Marian*, assumed the office of the former Queen of May. This far-famed lady has, according to Mr. Ritson, no part in the original and more authentic history of Robin Hood; but seems to have been first brought forward when the story of this hero became dramatised, which was at a very early period in this country; and Mr. Douce is of opinion that the name, which is a stranger to English history, has been taken from "a pretty French pastoral drama of the eleventh or twelfth century, entitled *Le jeu du berger et de la bergere*, in which the principal characters are *Robin* and *Marian*, a shepherd and shepherdess." \* This appears the more probable, as the piece was not only very popular in France, but performed at the season when the May-games took place in England.

*Maid Marian*, in the days of Shakspeare, was usually represented by a delicate, smooth-faced youth, who was dressed in all the fashionable finery of the times; and this assumption of the female garb gave, not without some reason, great offence to the puritanical dissenters, one of whom, exclaiming against the amusements of May-day, notices this, amongst some other abuses, in the following very curious passage:—"The abuses which are committed in your May-games are infinite. The first whereof is this, that you doe use to attyre in woman's apparrell whom you doe most commonly call *may-marrions*, whereby you infringe that straight commandment whiche is given in Deut. xxii. 5., that men must not put on women's apparrell for feare of enormities. Nay I myself have seene in a may game a troupe, the greater part whereof hath been men, and yet have they been attyred so like into women, that their faces being hidde (as they were indeede) a man coulde not discerne them from women. The second abuse, which of all other is the greatest, is this, that it hath been toulde that your morice dauncers have danned naked in nettes: what greater enticement unto naughtiness could have been devised? The third

\* Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 451.

abuse is, that you (because you will loose no tyme) doe use commonly to runne into woodes in the night time, amongst maidens, to fet bowes, in so much as I have hearde of tenne maidens which went to fet May, and nine of them came home with childe." \*

That, in consequence of this custom, effeminate and coxcomical men were sarcastically compared to *Maid Marian*, appears from a passage in a pamphlet by Barnaby Rich, who, satirising the male attire, as worn by the fops of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., cries out,—“From whence commeth this wearing, and this embroidering of long locks, this curiosity that is used amongst men, in frizeling and curling of their haire, this gentlewoman-like starcht bands, so be-edged and be-laced, *fitter for Maid Marian in a Moris dance*, than for him that hath either that spirit or courage that shold be in a gentleman.” †

It will not seem surprising that the converse of this was occasionally applicable to the female sex; and that those women who adopted masculine airs and habits should be branded with a similarity to the clown who, though personating the lady of the May, never failed, however nice or affected he might be, to disclose by the boldness and awkwardness of his gesture and manner, both his rank and sex. Thus Falstaff is represented as telling the hostess, when he means to upbraid her for her masculine appearance and conduct, that “for *woman hood* Maid Marian may be the Deputy’s wife of the ward to thee.” ‡ A fancy coronet of gilt metal, or interwoven with flowers, and a watchet coloured tunic, a kirtle or petticoat of green, as the livery of Robin Hood, were customary articles of decoration in the dress of the May-Queen.

*Friar Tuck*, the next of the four characters which we have mentioned as introduced into the May-games, was the chaplain of Robin

\* Fetherston’s Dialogue agaynst light, lewde, and lascivious dancing, 1582, 12mo. sign. D. 7. apud Douce.

† The honestie of this age, 1615, 4to. p. 35.

‡ First part of King Henry IV. act iii. sc. 3. Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 362.



Hood, and is noticed by Shakspeare, who makes one of the outlaws, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, swear

“ By the bare scalp of *Robin Hood's fat friar*.” \*

He is represented in the engraving of Mr. Tollet's window as a Franciscan friar in the full clerical tonsure ; for, as Mr. T. observes in giving an account of his window, “ when the parish priests were inhibited by the diocesan to assist in the May games, the Franciscans might give attendance, as being exempted from episcopal jurisdiction ;” he adds that “ most of Shakspeare's friars are Franciscans,” and that in Sir David Dalrymple's extracts from the book of the *Universal Kirk*, in the year 1576, he is styled “ chaplain to Robin Huid, king of May.” †

The last of this groupe was the boon companion of Robin, the “ *brave Little John*,” as he is termed in one of the ballads on this popular outlaw, and who “ is first mentioned,” remarks Mr. Douce, “ together with Robin Hood, by Fordun the Scottish historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century, and who speaks of the celebration of the story of these persons in the *theatrical performances* of his time, and of the minstrel's songs relating to them, which he says the common people preferred to all *other romances*.” ‡

With these *four* personages therefore, who were deemed so inseparable, that a character in Peele's *Edward I.* says, “ We will live and die together, like *Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tucke, and Maide Marian* §,” the performers in the simple English Morris, the *fool, Tom the Piper, and the Morris Dancers*, peculiarly so called from their

\* Act iv. sc. 1. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 266.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 438.

‡ Douce's *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, vol. ii. p. 450. Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, 1759, folio, tom ii. p. 104. “ In this time,” says Stow, that is, about the year 1190, in the reign of Richard I. “ were many robbers, and outlawes, among the which Robin Hood and Little John, renowned theeves, continued in woods, despoyling and robbing the goods of the rich.” *Annals*, p. 159.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 267. note by Malone.

dress and function, were, for a time, generally connected. Tom the Piper is thus mentioned by Drayton :

“ Myself above Tom Piper to advance,  
Which so bestirs him in the Morrice-dance  
For penny wage.” \*

And Shakspeare, alluding to the violent gesticulations and music of the Morris dancers says, speaking of Cade the rebel,

————— “ I have seen him  
Caper upright like a *wild morisco*,  
Shaking the bloody darts, as he his bells.” †

The music accompanying the *Morris* and the *May-games*, was either the simple pipe, or the pipe and tabor, or the bag-pipe. In the following passage from a curious controversial pamphlet, published towards the close of the sixteenth century, the morris and the pipe and tabor are thus noticed : “ If Menippus, or the man in the moone, be so quick sighted, that he beholds these bitter sweete jests, these railing outcries ; this shouting at prelates to cast them downe, and heaving at Martin to hang him up for Martilmas biefe ; what would he imagine otherwise, then as that stranger, which seeing a Quintessence (beside the *foole* and the *Maid Marian*) of all the picked youth, strained out of an whole Endship, footing the *morris about a may pole*, and he, not hearing the crie of the hounds, for the barking of dogs, (that is to say) the minstrelsie for the fidling, the tune for the sound, nor the *pipe for the noise of the tabor*, bluntly demanded if they were not all beside themselves, that they so lip’d and skip’d whithout an occasion.” ‡ To this quotation Mr. Haslewood has annexed the subsequent ludicrous story from a tract entitled, *Hay any worke for Cooper*. It is a striking proof of the singular attraction and popularity of the May-games at this

\* Eclogue iii. Chalmers’s Poets, vol. iv. p. 433.

† Second Part of King Henry the Sixth, act iii. sc. 1. Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xiii. p. 276.

‡ Plaine Percevall the peace-maker of England, &c. &c. Vide Censura Literaria, vol. ix. p. 250.



period:—"There is a neighbour of ours, an honest priest, who was sometimes (simple as he now stands) a vice in a play, for want of a better; his name is Gliberie of Hawstead in Essex, hee goes much to the pulpit. On a time, I thinke it was the last *May*, he went up with a full resolution to doe his businesse with great commendations. But, see the fortune of it. A boy in the church, hearing either the *summer lord with his May-game*, or *Robin Hood with his morice daunce*, going by the church, out goes the boye. Good Glibery, though he were in the pulpit, yet had a mind to his old companions abroad, (a company of merry grigs you must thinke them to be, as merry as a vice on a stage), seeing the boy going out, finished his matter presently with John of London's amen, saying, ha ye faith, boy! are they there? Then ha with thee, and so came downe and among them he goes." \*

That the music of the *bag-pipe* was highly esteemed in the days of Shakspeare, and even preferred to the tabor and pipe, we have a strong instance in his *Winter's Tale*, where a servant enters announcing Autolicus in the following terms: "If you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, *the bag-pipe could not move you* †;" and that especially in the country, it was a frequent accompaniment to the morris bells, the numerous collections of *madrigals*, published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, afford many proofs. Thus, from a collection printed in 1600:

"Harke, harke, I heare the dancing  
And a nimble morris prancing;  
*The bagpipe and the morris bells,*  
That they are not farre hence us tells;  
Come let us all goe thither,  
And dance like friends together:" ‡

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\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 251.

† Act iv. sc. 3. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 345.

‡ Canto Madrigals, of 5 and 6 parts, apt for the viols and voices. Made and newly published by Thomas Weelkes of the Coledge at Winchester, Organist. At London printed by Thomas Este, the assigne of Thomas Morley. 1600. 4to.

and from another, allusive to the May-games, edited by Thomas Morley :

“ Now is the month of Maying,  
When merry lads are playing ; Fa la la,  
Each with his bonny lasse,  
Upon the greeny grasse. Fa la la.

The spring clad all in gladness,  
Doth laugh at winter's sadnesse ;  
And to the *bagpipe's* sound,  
The nimphis tread out their ground.

About the May-pole new with glee and merriment,  
While as the *bagpipe* tooted it,  
Thirsis and Cloe fine together footed it ; Fa la la.” \*

The Morris and the May-game of Robin Hood attained their most perfect form when united with the *Hobby-Horse* and the *Dragon*. Of these the former was the resemblance of the head and tail of a horse, manufactured in pasteboard, and attached to a person whose business it was, whilst he seemed to ride gracefully on its back, to imitate the prancings and curvettings of that noble animal, whose supposed feet were concealed by a foot-cloth reaching to the ground ; and the latter, constructed of the same materials, was made to hiss and vibrate his wings, and was frequently attacked by the man on the hobby-horse, who then personated the character of St. George. †

\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 34.

† It is probable indeed from the subsequent Madrigal, that the Hobby-horse was frequently attached to, and provided for, by the town or village.

“ Our country swains, in the morris daunce,  
Thus woo'd and win their brides ;  
*Will, for our towne, the hobby horse*  
*A pleasure frolike rides.”* \*

\* Vide *Cantus primo*. Madrigals to 3, 4, 5, and 6 voyces. Made and newly published by Thomas Weelkes at London, printed by Thomas Este, 1597, 4to. *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 9—10.



In the reigns therefore of Elizabeth and James I. these eight masqueraders, consisting of *Robin Hood*, *Maid Marian*, *Friar Tuck*, *Little John*, the *Fool*, *Tom the Piper*, the *Hobby-Horse*, and the *Dragon*, with from two to ten *morris-dancers*, or, in lieu of them, the same number of *Robin Hood's men*, in coats, hoods, and hose of green, with a painted *pole* in the centre, represented the most complete establishment of the May-game. \*

All these characters may be traced, indeed, so far back as the middle of the fifteenth century ; and, accordingly, Mr. Strutt, in his interesting romance, entitled "*Queen-hoo Hall*," has introduced a very pleasing and accurate description of the May-games and Morris of Robin Hood, which, as written in a lively and dramatic style, and not in the least differing from what they continued to be in the youthful days of Shakspeare, and before they were broken in upon by the fanaticism of the puritans, we shall copy in this place for the entertainment of our readers.

" In the front of the pavilion, a large square was staked out, and fenced with ropes, to prevent the crowd from pressing upon the performers, and interrupting the diversion ; there were also two bars at the bottom of the inclosure, through which the actors might pass and repass, as occasion required.

" Six young men first entered the square, clothed in jerkins of leather, with axes upon their shoulders like woodmen, and their heads bound with large garlands of ivy-leaves intertwined with sprigs of hawthorn. Then followed,

\* " The English were famed," observes Dr. Grey, " for these and such like diversions; and even the old, as well as young persons, formerly followed them: a remarkable instance of which is given by Sir William Temple, (*Miscellanea*, Part 3. *Essay of Health and Long Life*), who makes mention of a *Morrice Dance* in Herefordshire, from a noble person, who told him he had a pamphlet in his library written by a very ingenious gentleman of that county, which gave an account how, in such a year of King James's reign, there went about the country a sett of *Morrice Dancers*, composed of *ten* men, who danced a *Maid Marian*, and a *taber and pipe*: and how these ten, one with another, made up twelve hundred years. 'Tis not so much, says he, that so many in one county should live to that age, as that they should be in vigour and humour to travel and dance." Grey's *Notes on Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 382.

“ Six young maidens of the village, dressed in blue kirtles, with garlands of primroses on their heads, leading a fine sleek cow, decorated with ribbons of various colours, interspersed with flowers; and the horns of the animal were tipped with gold. These were succeeded by

“ Six foresters, equipped in green tunics, with hoods and hosen of the same colour; each of them carried a bugle-horn attached to a baldrick of silk, which he sounded as he passed the barrier. After them came

“ Peter Lanaret, the baron’s chief falconer, who personified *Robin Hood*; he was attired in a bright grass-green tunic, fringed with gold; his hood and his hosen were parti-coloured, blue and white; he had a large garland of rose-buds on his head, a bow bent in his hand, a sheaf of arrows at his girdle, and a bugle-horn depending from a baldrick of light blue tarantine, embroidered with silver; he had also a sword and a dagger, the hilts of both being richly embossed with gold.

“ Fabian a page, as *Little John*, walked at his right hand; and Cecil Cellerman the butler, as Will Stukely, at his left. These, with ten others of the jolly outlaw’s attendants who followed, were habited in green garments, bearing their bows bent in their hands, and their arrows in their girdles. Then came

“ Two maidens, in orange-coloured kirtles with white \* courtpies; strewing flowers; followed immediately by

“ The *maid Marian*, elegantly habited in a watchet-coloured † tunic reaching to the ground; over which she wore a white linen ‡ rochet with loose sleeves, fringed with silver, and very neatly plaited; her girdle was of silver baudekin §, fastened with a double bow on the left side; her long flaxen hair was divided into many ringlets, and flowed upon her shoulders; the top part of her head was covered

\* *Courtpie*, in women’s dress, a short vest. Strutt.

† *Watchet-coloured*, pale blue. Strutt.

‡ *Rochet*, a lawn garment resembling a surplice gathered at the wrists. Strutt.

§ *Baudekin*, a cloth of gold tissue, with figures in silk, for female dress. Strutt.



with a net-work cawl of gold, upon which was placed a garland of silver, ornamented with blue violets. She was supported by

“ Two bride-maidens, in sky-coloured rochets girt with crimson girdles, wearing garlands upon their heads of blue and white violets. After them, came

“ Four other females in green courtpies, and garlands of violets and cowslips : Then

“ Sampson the smith, as *Friar Tuck*, carrying a huge quarter-staff on his shoulder ; and Morris the mole-taker, who represented Much the miller’s son, having a long pole with an inflated bladder attached to one end \* : And after them

“ The *May-pole*, drawn by eight fine oxen, decorated with scarfs, ribbons, and flowers of divers colours ; and the tips of their horns were embellished with gold. The rear was closed by

“ The *Hobby-horse* and the *Dragon*.

“ When the May-pole was drawn into the square, the foresters sounded their horns, and the populace expressed their pleasure by shouting incessantly untill it reached the place assigned for its elevation : — and during the time the ground was preparing for its reception, the barriers of the bottom of the inclosure were opened for the villagers to approach, and adorn it with ribbons, garlands, and flowers, as their inclination prompted them.

“ The pole being sufficiently onerated with finery, the square was cleared from such as had no part to perform in the pageant ; and then it was elevated amidst the reiterated acclamations of the spectators. The woodmen and the milk-maidens danced around it according to the rustic fashion ; the measure was played by Peretto Cheveritte, the baron’s chief minstrel, on the bagpipes accompanied with the pipe and tabour, performed by one of his associates. When the dance was finished, Gregory the jester, who undertook to play the hobby-horse, came forward with his appropriate equipment, and;

\* The mole-taker, in this place, personates the character of the *fool* or domestic buffoon.



frisking up and down the square without restriction, imitated the galloping, curvetting, ambling, trotting, and other paces of a horse, to the infinite satisfaction of the lower classes of the \* spectators. He was followed by Peter Parker, the baron's ranger, who personated a dragon, hissing, yelling, and shaking his wings with wonderful ingenuity; and to complete the mirth, Morris, in the character of Much, having small bells attached to his knees and elbows, capered here and there between the two monsters in the form of a dance; and as often as he came near to the sides of the inclosure, he cast sily a handful of meal into the faces of the gaping rustics, or rapped them about their heads with the bladder tied at the end of his † pole. In the mean time, Sampson, representing Friar Tuck, walked with much gravity around the square, and occasionally let fall his heavy staff upon the toes of such of the crowd as he thought were approaching more forward than they ought to do; and if the sufferers cried out from the sense of pain, he addressed them in a solemn tone of voice, advising them to count their beads, say a paternoster or two, and to beware of purgatory. These vagaries were highly palatable to the populace, who announced their delight by repeated plaudits and loud bursts of laughter; for this reason they were continued for a considerable length of time: but Gregory, beginning at last to falter in his paces, ordered the dragon to fall back: the well-nurtured beast, being out of breath, readily obeyed, and their two companions followed their example; which concluded this part of the pastime.

\* The management of the hobby-horse appears to have been the most difficult part of the May-day festivities, and from the following passage in an old play, to have required some preparatory discipline. A character personating this piece of pageantry, and angry with the mayor of the town as being his rival, calls out, "Let the mayor play the hobby-horse among his brethren, an he will, I hope our towne-lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practic'd my reines, my careeres, my pranckers, my ambles, my false trots, my smooth ambles and Canterbury paces, and shall master mayor put me besides the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the fore horse bells, his plumes and braveries, nay had his mane new shorne and frizl'd, and shall the mayor put me besides the hobby-horse?" The Vow breaker, by Sampson.

† The morris-dance in this description of the May-game seems to have been performed chiefly by the fool, with the occasional assistance of the hobby-horse, which was always decorated with bells, and the dragon.



" Then the archers set up a target at the lower part of the Green, and made trial of their skill in a regular succession. Robin Hood and Will Stukely excelled their comrades: and both of them lodged an arrow in the centre circle of gold, so near to each other that the difference could not readily be decided, which occasioned them to shoot again; when Robin struck the gold a second time, and Stukely's arrow was affixed upon the edge of it. Robin was therefore adjudged the conqueror; and the prize of honour, a garland of laurel embellished with variegated ribbons, was put upon his head; and to Stukely was given a garland of ivy, because he was the second best performer in that contest.

" The pageant was finished with the archery; and the procession began to move away, to make room for the villagers, who afterwards assembled in the square, and amused themselves by dancing round the May-pole in promiscuous companies, according to the ancient custom." \*

In consequence of the opposition, however, of the puritans, during the close of Elizabeth's reign, who considered the rights of May-day as relics of paganism, much havoc was made among the *Dramatis Personæ* of this festivity. Sometimes instead of Robin and Marian, only a Lord or Lady of the day was adopted; frequently the friar was not suffered to appear, and still more frequently was the hobby-horse interdicted. This zealous interference of the sectarists was ridiculed by the poets of the day, and among the rest by Shakspeare, who quotes a line from a satirical ballad on this subject, and represents Hamlet as terming it an epitaph; " Else shall he suffer not thinking on," says he, " with the hobby-horse; whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby horse is forgot.*" † He has the same allusion in *Love's Labour's Lost* ‡; and Ben Jonson has still more explicitly noticed the neglect into which this character in the May-games had fallen in his days.

\* Strutt's *Queenhoo-Hall*, a romance, vol. i. p. 13. et seq.

† Act iii. sc. 2. Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xviii. p. 198.

‡ Act iii. sc. 1. Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. vii. p. 53, 54.

" But see, the Hobby-horse is forgot.  
Foole, it must be your lot,  
To supply his want with faces,  
And some other Buffon graces;" \*

and again, still more pointedly, —

" *Clo.* They should be Morris dancers by their gingle, but they have no napkins.

*Coc.* No, nor a hobby-horse.

*Clo.* Oh, he's *often forgotten*, that's no rule; but there is no maid Marian nor Friar amongst them, which is the surer mark.

*Coc.* Nor a Foole that I see." †

In Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragi-comedy called *Women Pleased*, the aversion of the puritans to this festive beast is strikingly depicted; where the person who was destined to perform the hobby-horse, being converted by his wife, exclaims vehemently against the task imposed upon him.

" *Hob.*

I do defie thee and thy foot-cloth too,  
And tell thee to thy face, this prophane riding  
I feel it in my conscience, and I dare speak it,  
This unedified ambling hath brought a scourge upon us. —

*Far.*

Will you dance no more, neighbour?

*Hob.*

Surely no,  
Carry the beast to his crib: I have renounc'd him  
And all his works.

*Soto.*

*Shall the Hobby-horse be forgot then?*  
*The hopeful Hobby-horse, shall he lye founder'd?*

\* Entertainment of the Queen and Prince at Althorpe. 1603. fol. edit. vol. i. p. 99.

† The *Metamorphosed Gipsies*, fol. edit. vol. 2. p. 65. — This folio edition of Jonson's works, in two volumes, dated 1640, is not regularly paged to the close of each volume; for instance, in vol. i. the Dramas terminate at p. 668, and then the Epigrammes, Forest, Masques, &c. commence with p. 1.



I cry out on't,

'Twas the forerunning sin brought in those tilt-staves,

They brandish 'gainst the church, the Devil calls *May poles*." \*

From one of these puritans, named Stephen Gosson, we learn, likewise, that Morrice-dancers and Hobby-horses had been introduced even upon the stage during the early part of the reign of Elizabeth; for this writer, in a tract published about 1579, and entitled *Plays Confuted*, says, that "the Devil beaside the beautie of the houses, and the stages, sendeth in gearish apparell, maskes, ranting, tumbling, dauncing of giggers, galiardes, *morisces*, *hobbi-horses*, &c." † By the continued railings and invectives, however, of these fanatics, the May-games were, at length, so broken in upon, that had it not been for the *Book of Sports, or lawful Recreations upon Sunday after Evening-prayers, and upon Holy-days*, issued by King James in 1618, they would have been totally extinct. This curious volume permitted May-games, Morris-dances, Whitsun-ales, the setting up of May-poles, &c. ‡; and

\* Act iv. sc. 1.—Jonson in his *Bartholmew Fayre*, acted in the year 1614, has a character of this kind, a Baker, who has undergone a similar conversion, and is thus introduced:—

"Win. W. What call you the Reverend *Elder*, you told me of? your Banbury-man.

Joh. *Rabbi Busy*, Sir, he is more than an *Elder*, he is a *Prophet*, Sir.

Quar. O, I know him! a Baker, is he not?

Joh. Hee was a Baker, Sir, but hee do's dreame now, and see visions, he has given over his Trade.

Quar. I remember that too: out of a scruple hee tooke, that (in spic'd conscience) those Cakes hee made, were serv'd to *Bridales*, *May poles*, *Morrisces*, and such prophane feasts and meetings; his Christen-name is *Zeale-of-the-land Busy*."

Jonson's Works, fol. edit. vol. ii. p. vi. act i. sc. 3.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 198, note, Steevens.

‡ Wilson, censuring these indulgences, places the era of the publication of the *Book of Sports* under 1617, and says of it, that "some of the Bishops, pretending *Recreations*, and *liberty* to servants and the common people (of which they carved to themselves too much already) procured the King to put out a Book to permit dancing about *May-poles*, *Church-ales*, and such debauched exercises upon the Sabbath-Day after Evening-Prayer (being a specious way to make the King, and them, acceptable to the *Rout*): which Book came out with a command, injoyning all Ministers to read it to their parishioners, and to approve of it; and those that did not, were brought into the high *Commission*, imprisoned and suspended." The History of Great Britain, being the Life and Reign of King James the First, relating to what passed from his first access to the Crown, till his death. Folio, London 1653. p. 105.



had it not allowed church-ales, and dancing on the Sabbath, would have been unexceptionable in its tendency ; for as honest Burton observes, in allusion to this very *Declaration* of King James, “ *Dancing, Singing, Masking, Mumming, Stage-playes*, howsoever they be heavily censured by some severe *Catoes*, yet if *opportunately* and *soberly used*, may justly be approved. *Melius est fodere, quam saltare*, saith *Augustin* : but what is that if they delight in it ? *Nemo saltat sobrius*. But in what kind of dance ? I know these sports have many oppugners, whole volumes writ against them ; when as all they say (if duly considered) is but *ignoratio Elenchi* ; and some again, because they are now cold and wayward, past themselves, cavil at all such youthful sports in others, as he did in the Comedy ; they think them, *illico nasci senes*, &c. Some out of preposterous zeal object many times trivial arguments, and because of some abuse, will quite take away the good use, as if they should forbid wine, because it makes men drunk ; but in my judgment they are too stern : there is a time for all things, a time to mourn, a time to dance. Eccles. 3. 4. a time to embrace, a time not to embrace, (ver. 5.) and nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, ver. 22. For my part, I will subscribe to the *King's Declaration*, and was ever of that mind, those *May-games, Wakes, and Whitsun-ales*, &c. if they be not at *unseasonable* hours, may justly be permitted. Let them freely feast, sing and dance, have their *poppet-playes, hobby-horses, tabers, crouds, bag-pipes*, &c., play at *ball*, and *barley-brakes*, and what sports and recreations they like best.” \* All these festivities, however, on *May-day*, were again set aside, by still greater enthusiasts, during the period of the Commonwealth, and were once more revived at the Restoration ; at present, few vestiges remain either of those ancient rites, or of those attendant on other popular periodical festivals. †

\* Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, 8th edit. fol. p. 174.

† “ The last May-pole in London was taken down in 1717, and conveyed to Wanstead in Essex, where it was fixed in the Park for the support of an immensely large telescope. Its original height was upwards of one hundred feet above the surface of the ground, and



Several of the amusements, and some of the characters attendant on the celebration of May-day, were again introduced at WHITSUNTIDE, especially the morris-dance, which was as customary on this period of festivity as on the one immediately preceding it. Thus Shakspeare, in King Henry V., makes the Dauphin say, alluding to the youthful follies of the English monarch,

————— "Let us do it with no show of fear;  
No, with no more, than if we heard that England  
Were busied with a *Whitsun morris-dance*." \*

The rural sports and feasting at Whitsuntide were usually designated by the term *Whitsun-ales*; *ale* being in the time of Shakspeare, and for a century or two, indeed, before him, synonymous with *festival* or *merry-making*. Chaucer and the author of *Pierce Plowman* use the word repeatedly in this sense, and the following passages from our great poet, from Jonson, and from Ascham, prove that it was familiar, in their time, in the sense of simple carousing, church-feasting, and Whitsuntide recreation. Launcelot, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, exclaims to Speed, "Thou hast not so much charity in thee, as to go to the *ale* with a Christian †;" and Ascham, speaking of the conduct of husbandmen, in his *Toxophilus*, observes that those which have their dinner and drink in the field, "have fatter barnes in the harvest, than they which will either sleape at noonetyme of the day, or els *make merye with theyr neighbours at the ale*." ‡ In the chorus to the first act of *Pericles*, it is recorded of an old song, that

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its station on the East side of Somerset-House, where the new church now stands. — POPE thus perpetuates its remembrance:

Amidst the area wide they took their stand,  
Where the tall May-pole once o'erlook'd the Strand."

Clavis Calendaria, vol. i. p. 318.

\* Act ii. sc. 4. Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 354.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 231. act ii. sc. 6.

‡ Ascham's Works apud Bennet, p. 62, 63.

"It hath been sung at festivals,  
On ember-eves, and *holy-ales*." \*

And Jonson says,

— "All the neighbourhood, from old records  
Of antique proverbs drawn from *Whitsun lords*,  
And their authorities at wakes and *ales*,  
With country precedents, and old wives tales,  
We bring you now." †

It will be necessary, in this place, therefore, to notice briefly, as being periods of festivity, the various *Ales* which were observed by our ancestors in the sixteenth century. They may be enumerated under the heads of *Leet-ale*, *Lamb-ale*, *Bride-ale*, *Clerk-ale*, *Church-ale* and *Whitsun-ale*. We shall confine our attention at present, however, principally to the two latter; for of the *Lamb-ale* and *Bride-ale*, an occasion will occur to speak more at large in a subsequent part of this chapter, and a very few words will suffice with regard to the *Leet-ale* and the *Clerk-ale*; the former being merely the dinner provided for the jury and customary tenants at the court-leet of a manor, or *View of frank pledge*, formerly held once or twice a year, before the steward of the leet ‡; to this court Shakspeare alludes, in his *Taming of the Shrew*, where the servant tells Sly, that in his dream he would "rail upon the hostess of the house," and threaten to

———— "present her at the leet:" §

and the latter, which usually took place at Easter, is thus mentioned by Aubrey in his manuscript History of Wiltshire. "In the Easter holidays was the *Clarkes-Ale*, for his private benefit and the solace of the neighbourhood." ||

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xxi. p. 155.

† Jonson's Works, fol. edit.

‡ "A leet," observes Bullokar, in his *English Expositor*, 1616, "is a court, or law-day, holden commonly every half year."

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 33. act i. sc. 2.

|| Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 129, note.



The *Church-ale* was a festival instituted sometimes in honour of the church-saint, but more frequently for the purpose of contributing towards the repair or decoration of the church. On this occasion it was the business of the churchwardens to brew a considerable quantity of strong ale, which was sold to the populace in the church-yard, and to the better sort in the church itself, a practice which, independent of the profit arising from the sale of the liquor, led to great pecuniary advantages; for the rich thought it a meritorious duty, beside paying for their ale, to offer largely to the holy fund. It was no uncommon thing indeed to have four, six, or eight of these *ales* yearly, and sometimes one or more parishes agreed to hold annually a *certain number* of these meetings, and to contribute individually a *certain sum*. Of this a very curious proof may be drawn from the following stipulation, preserved in Dodsworth's Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library:—  
 “The parishioners of Elveston and Okebrook, in Derbyshire, agree jointly, to brew four *Ales*, and every *Ale* of one quarter of malt, betwixt this (the time of contract) and the feast of saint John Baptist next coming. And that every inhabitant of the said town of Okebrook shall be at the several *Ales*. And every husband and his wife shall pay two pence, and every cottager one penny, and all the inhabitants of Elveston shall have and receive all the profits and advantages coming of the said *Ales*, to the use and behoof of the said church of Elveston. And the inhabitants of Elveston shall brew *eight Ales* betwixt this and the feast of saint John Baptist, at the which *Ales* the inhabitants of Okebrook shall come and pay as before rehersed. And if he be away at one *Ale*, to pay at the toder Ale for both, &c.”\*

The date of this document is anterior to the Reformation, but that *church-ales* were equally popular and frequent in the days of Shakspeare will be evident from the subsequent passages in Carew and Philip Stubbes. The historian of Cornwall, whose work was first printed in 1602, says that “for the church-ale, two young men of the parish are yerely chosen by their last foregoers, to be wardens; who, dividing

\* MSS. Bibl. Bod., vol. cxlviii. fol. 97.



the task, make collection among the parishioners, of what soever provision it pleaseth them voluntarily to bestow. This they imploy in brewing, baking, and other acates, against Whitsontide; upon which holy-dayes the neighbours meet at the church-house, and there merily feede on their owne victuals, contributing some petty portion to the stock; which, by many smalls, groweth to a meetley greatness: for there is entertayned a kinde of emulation betweene these wardens, who by his graciousness in gathering, and good husbandry in expending, can best advance the churches profit. Besides, the neighbour parishes at those times lovingly visit one another, and this way frankly spend their money together. The afternoones are consumed in such exercises as olde and yong folke (having leysure) doe accustomedly weare out the time withall." \* Stubbes in his violent philippic declares that, "in certaine townes, where drunken Bacchus bears swaie against Christmas and Easter, Whitsunday, or some other time, the churchwardens, for so they call them, of every parish, with the consent of the whole parish, provide half a score or twentie quarters of mault, whereof some they buy of the church stocke, and some is given to them of the parishioners themselves, every one conferring somewhat, according to his ability; which mault being made into very strong ale, or beer, is set to sale, either in the church or in some other place assigned to that purpose. Then, when this nippitatum, this huffe-cappe, as they call it, this nectar of life, is set abroach, well is he that can get the soonest to it, and spends the most at it, for he is counted the godliest man of all the rest, and most in God's favour, because it is spent upon his church forsooth." †

There is but too much reason to suppose that the satire of this bitter writer was not, in this instance, ill directed, and that meetings of this description, though avowedly for the express benefit of the church, were often productive of licentiousness, and consequently highly injurious both to morals and religion. A few lines from Ben Jonson will pro-

\* Carew's Survey of Cornwall, edit. of 1769. p. 68.

† Anatomie of Abuses, A. D. 1595.



bably place this beyond doubt. In his Masque of Queens, performed at Whitehall, 1609, he represents one of his witches as exclaiming

“ I had a dagger: what did I with that?  
Kill'd an infant, to have his fat:  
A Piper it got, at a *Church-ale*.” \*

Returning to the consideration of the *Whitsuntide* amusements, it may be observed, that not only was the morris a constituent part in their celebration, but that the Maid Marian of the May-games was frequently introduced: thus Shirley represents one of his characters exclaiming against rural diversions in the following manner:

——— “ Observe with what solemnity  
They keep their wakes, and throw for pewter candlestickes,  
How they become the morris, with whose bells  
They ring all into *Whitson ales*, and sweate  
Through twentie scarffes and napkins, till the Hobby-horse  
Tire, and the *maide Marrian* dissolv'd to a gelly,  
Be kept for spoone meate.” †

The festivities, indeed, on this occasion, as at those on May-day, were often regulated by a Lord and Lady of the *Whitsun-ales*. ‡ Very frequently, however, there was elected only a Lord of Misrule; and as the church or holy ales were not unfrequently combined with the merriments of this season, the church-yard, especially on the sabbath-day, was too generally the scene of rejoicing. The severity of Stubbes, when censuring this profanation of consecrated ground, will scarcely

\* Jonson's Works, fol. edit. vol. i. p. 166.

† The Lady of Pleasure, act i.

‡ The former of which is thus noticed by Sir Philip Sidney:—

“ Strephon, with leavy twigs of laurell tree,  
A garlant made on temples for to weare,  
For he then chosen was the dignitie  
Of village Lord that *Whitsuntide* to beare.”

The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadie, 7th edit. fol. 1629. p. 84.

be deemed too keen: "First," says he, "all the wilde heads of the parish, flocking together, chuse them a graund captaine (of mischiefe) whom they inrolle with the title of *my Lord of misrule*, and him they crowne with great solemnitie, and adopt for their king. This king annoynted, chooseth foorth twentie, fourtie, threescore, or a hundred lustie guttes like to himselfe to wait upon his lordly majesty, and to guarde his noble person. — (Here he describes the dress of the morris dancers, as quoted in a former page, and proceeds as follows.) Thus all things set in order, then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons and other antiques, together with their baudie pipers, and thundering drummers, to strike up the *Devils Daunce* withall: then martch this heathen company towards the church and church-yarde, their pypers pyping, their drummers thundering, their stumpes dauncing, their belles jynghing, their handkercheefes fluttering about their heads like madde men, their hobbie horses, and other monsters skirmishing amongst the throng: and in this sorte they goe to the church like Devils incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voyce. Then the foolish people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pageants solemnized in this sort. Then after this about the church they goe againe and againe, and so foorth into the church yard, where they have commonly their summer haules, their bowers, arbours, and banquetting houses set up, wherein they feast, banquet, and daunce all that day, and (peradventure) all that night too. And thus these terrestrial furies spend the Sabbath day. Another sort of fantastical fooles bring to these helhoundes (the Lord of misrule and his complices) some bread, some good ale, some new cheese, some old cheese, some custardes, some cracknels, some cakes, some flaunes, some tartes, some creame, some meat, some one thing, some another; but if they knewe that as often as they bringe anye to the maintenance of these execrable pastimes, they offer sacrifice to the Devill and Sathanas, they would repente and with drawe their handes, which God graunt they may." \*

\* *Anatomic of Abuses*, 1595. p. 107.



Dramatic exhibitions, called *Whitsun plays*, were common, at this season, both in town and country, and in the latter they were chiefly of a pastoral character. Shakspeare has an allusion to them in his *Winter's Tale*, where Perdita, addressing Florizel, says,

————— “ Come, take your flowers:  
Methinks, I play as I have seen them do  
In *Whitsun' pastorals*.” \*

Soon after Whitsuntide began the season of sheep-shearing, which was generally terminated about midsummer, and either at its commencement or close, was distinguished by the LAMB-ALE or SHEEP-SHEARING FEAST. At Kidlington in Oxfordshire, it seems to have been *ushered in* by ceremonies of a peculiar kind, for, according to Blount, “ the Monday after the Whitsun week, a fat lamb was provided, and the maidens of the town, having their thumbs tied behind them, were permitted to run after it, and she who with her mouth took hold of the lamb was declared the Lady of the Lamb, which, being killed and cleaned, but with the skin hanging upon it, was carried on a long pole before the lady and her companions to the green, attended with music, and a morisco dance of men, and another of women. The rest of the day was spent in mirth and merry glee. Next day the lamb, partly baked, partly boiled, and partly roasted, was served up for the lady's feast, where she sat, majestically at the upper end of the table, and her companions with her, the music playing during the repast, which, being finished, the solemnity ended.” †

The most usual mode, however, of celebrating this important period was by a dinner, music, with songs, and the election of a Shepherd King, an office always conferred upon the individual

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 341. Act iv. sc. 3.—Whitsun playes or mysteries, which at first were exclusively drawn from the sacred page, may be traced to the fourteenth century; those which were performed at Chester have been attributed to Ranulph Higden, the chronicler, who died 1363.

† Blount's Ancient Tenures, p. 49, and Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 316.

whose flock had produced the earliest lamb. The dinner is thus enjoined by the rustic muse of Tusser : —

“ Wife make us a dinner, spare flesh neither corne,  
 Make wafers and cakes, for our sheepe must be shorne,  
 At sheep-shearing, neighbours none other things crave,  
 But good cheare and welcome, like neighbours to have.” \*

But it is from Drayton that we derive the most minute account of the festival; who in the fourteenth song of his *Poly-Olbion*, and still more at large in his ninth *Eclogue*, has given a most pleasing picture of this rural holy-day: —

“ When the new-wash’d flock from the river’s side,  
 Coming as white as January’s snow,  
 The ram with nosegays bears his horns in pride,  
 And no less brave the bell-wether doth go.

After their fair flocks in a lusty rout,  
 Come the gay swains with bag-pipes strongly blown,  
 And busied, though this solemn sport about,  
 Yet had each one an eye unto his own.

And by the ancient statutes of the field,  
 He that his flocks the earliest lamb should bring,  
 (As it fell out then, Rowland’s charge to yield)  
 Always for that year was the shepherd’s king.

And soon preparing for the shepherd’s board,  
 Upon a green that curiously was squar’d,  
 With country cates being plentifully stor’d:  
 And ’gainst their coming handsomely prepar’d.

New whig, with water from the clearest stream,  
 Green plumbs, and wildings, cherries chief of feast,  
 Fresh cheese, and dowsets, curds, and clouted cream,  
 Spic’d syllibubs, and cyder of the best:

And to the same down solemnly they sit,  
 In the fresh shadow of their summer bowers,  
 With sundry sweets them every way to fit,  
 The neighb’ring vale despoiled of her flowers. —

\* Tusser apud Hilton, p. 80.



When now, at last, as lik'd the shepherd's king,  
 (At whose command they all obedient were)  
 Was pointed, who the roundelay should sing,  
 And who again the under-song should bear." \*

Shakspeare also, in his *Winter's Tale*, has presented us not only with a list of the good things necessary for a sheep-shearing feast, but he describes likewise the attentions which were due, on this occasion, from the hostess, or Shepherd's Queen.

"Let me see," says the Clown, "what I am to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? *Three pound of sugar; five pound of currants; rice* — What will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and *she lays it on*. She hath made me four-and-twenty nosegays for the shearers: three-man song-men all †, and very good ones; but they are most of them means ‡ and bases: but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to horn-pipes. I must have *saffron*, to colour the *warden pies*; mace, — dates, — none; that's out of my note: *nutmegs, seven; a race, or two, of ginger*: but that I may beg; — *four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o' the sun*." §

The culinary articles in this detail are somewhat more expensive than those enumerated by Drayton; and Mr. Steevens, in a note on this passage of the *Winter's Tale*, observes that "the expence attending these festivities, appears to have afforded matter of complaint. Thus, in *Questions of profitable and pleasant Concernings*, &c. 1594: 'If it be a *sheep-shearing feast*, maister Bailly can entertaine you with his bill of reckonings to his maister of three sheapheard's wages, spent on *fresh cates*, besides *spices* and *saffron pottage*.'" ||

The shepherd's reproof to his adopted daughter, Perdita, as Polixenes remarks,

—— "the prettiest low-born lass, that ever  
 Ran on the green-sward,"

\* Chalmers's Poets, vol. iv. p. 443.

† Singers of catches in three parts.

‡ By *means* are meant tenors.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 323, 324. Act iv. sc. 2.

|| Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 323. note 5.

implies indirectly the duties which were expected by the peasants, on this day, from their rural queen, and which seems to have been sufficiently numerous and laborious : —

“ Fye, daughter, when my old wife liv’d, upon  
This day, she was both pantler, butler, cook;  
Both dame and servant : welcom’d all; serv’d all :  
Would sing her song, and dance her turn : now here,  
At upper end o’ the table, now, i the middle;  
On his shoulder, and his : her face o’ fire  
With labour; and the thing, she took to quench it,  
She would to each one sip : You are retir’d,  
As if you were a feasted one, and not  
The hostess of the meeting : Pray you, bid  
These unknown friends to us welcome : for it is  
A way to make us better friends, more known.  
Come, quench your blushes; and present yourself  
That which you are, mistress o’ the feast : Come on,  
And bid us welcome to your *sheep-shearing*,  
As your good flock shall prosper.” \*

It should be remarked that one material part of this welcome appears, from the context, to have consisted in the distribution of various flowers, suited to the ages of the respective visitors, a ceremony which was, probably, customary at this season of rejoicing.

“ *Perdita*. Give me those flowers there, Dorcas. — Reverend sirs,  
For you there’s rosemary, and rue; these keep  
Seeming, and savour, all the winter long :  
Grace, and remembrance, be to you both,  
And welcome to our shearing ! —

————— Here’s flowers for you;  
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;  
The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun,  
And with him rises weeping; these are flowers

---

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 334. Act iv. sc. 3. — I believe the custom of choosing a king and queen at the sheep-shearing feast, is still continued in several of our counties; that it was commonly observed, at least, in the time of Thomson, is evident from the following lines, taken from his description of this festival : —

“ One, chief, in gracious dignity enthron’d,  
Shines o’er the rest, the *Pas’tral Queen*, and rays  
Her smiles, sweet-beaming on her *Shepherd King*.” Summer.



Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given  
 To men of middle age : You are very welcome. —  
 ———— Now, my fairest friend,  
 I would, I had some flowers of the spring, that might  
 Become your time of day ; and yours, and yours ;  
 That wear upon your virgin branches yet  
 Your maidenheads growing : — O, these I lack,  
 To make you garlands of.” \*

A custom somewhat allied to this, that of scattering flowers on the streams at *shearing time*, has been long observed in the south-west of England, and is thus alluded to as an ancient rite by Dyer, in his beautifully descriptive poem entitled *The Fleece* :

——— “ With light fantastic toe, the nymphs  
 Thither assembled, thither ev’ry swain ;  
 And o’er the dimpled stream a thousand flowers,  
 Pale lilies, roses, violets and pinks,  
 Mixt with the greens of burnet, mint and thyme,  
 And trefoil, sprinkled with their sportive arms.  
 Such custom holds along the irriguous vales,  
 From Wreakin’s brow to rocky Dolvoryn,  
 Sabrina’s early haunt.” †

That one of the principal seasons of rejoicing should take place on securely collecting the fruits of the field, it is natural to expect ; and accordingly, in almost every country, a HARVEST-HOME, or Feast, has been observed on this occasion.

Much of the festivity and jocular freedom however, which subsisted formerly at this period, has been worn away by the increasing refinements and distinctions of society. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and, indeed, during a part of the eighteenth, the Harvest, or *Mell*, Supper, as it was sometimes called, from the French word *Mesler*, to mingle or mix together, was a scene not only remarkable for merriment and hospitality, but for a temporary suspension of all inequality between master and man. The whole family sate down at the same table, and conversed, danced, and sang

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 334, 335, 337, 338, 340.

† Dyer’s *Fleece*, book i. *sub finem*.

together during the entire night without difference or distinction of any kind; and, in many places indeed, this freedom of manner subsisted during the whole period of getting in the Harvest. Thus Tusser, recommending the social equality of the Harvest-tide, exclaims,

“ In harvest time, harvest folke, *servants and al*,  
should make *altogether*, good cheere in the hal :  
And fil out the blacke bol, of bleith to their song,  
and let them be merrie, *al harvest time long*.” \*

Of this ancient convivial licence, a modern rural poet has drawn a most pleasing picture, lamenting, at the same time, that the Harvest-Feast of the present day is but the phantom of what it was : —

“ The aspect only with the substance gone.

Behold the sound oak table's massy frame  
Bestride the kitchen floor ! the careful dame  
And gen'rous host invite their friends around,  
*While all that clear'd the crop, or till'd the ground,*  
*Are guests by right of custom : ———*  
*Here once a year Distinction low'rs its crest,*  
*The master, servant, and the merry guest,*  
*Are equal all ;* and round the happy ring  
The reaper's eyes exulting glances fling,  
And, warm'd with gratitude, he quits his place,  
With sun-burnt hands and ale-enliven'd face,  
Refills the jug his honour'd host to tend,  
To serve at once the master and the friend ;  
Proud thus to meet his smiles, to share his tale,  
His nuts, his conversation, and his ale.  
*Such were the days, ——— of days long past I sing.* †

---

\* Tusser Redivivus, p. 104. In the first edition of Tusser, 1557, this stanza is as follows : —

“ Then welcome thy harvest folke, serveauntes and all :  
with mirth and good chere, let them furnish the hall.  
The harvest lorde nightly, must give thee a song :  
fill him then the blacke boll, or els he hath wrong.”

Reprint by Sir Egerton Brydges, p. 19.

† Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy, Summer, l. 299.



It will be necessary to enter a little more minutely into the rites and ceremonies which accompanied this annual feast in the days of Shakspeare, and fortunately we can appeal to a few curious documents on which dependence can be placed. Hentzner, a learned German who travelled through Germany, England, France, and Italy, towards the close of the sixteenth century, and whose Itinerary, as far as it relates to this country, has been translated by the late Lord Orford, says, "as we were returning to our inn (from Windsor), we happened to meet some country people *celebrating their harvest-home*; their last load of corn they crown with flowers, having besides an image richly dressed, by which, perhaps, they would signify Ceres; this they keep moving about, while men and women, men and maid servants, riding through the streets in the cart, shout as loud as they can till they arrive at the barn." \* Dr. Moresin also, another foreigner, who published, in the reign of James I., an elaborate work on the "Origin and Increase of Depravity in Religion," relates that he saw "in England the country people bringing home, in a cart from the harvest field, a figure made of corn, round which men and women were promiscuously singing, preceded by a piper and a drum." †

To this custom of accompanying home the last waggon-load of corn, at the close of harvest, with music, Shakspeare is supposed to allude in the *Merchant of Venice*, where Lorenzo tells the musicians to pierce his mistress' ear with sweetest touches,

"And draw her home with musick." ‡

It was usual also, not only to feast the men and women, but to reward likewise the boys and girls who were in any degree instru-

\* Paul Hentzner's Travels in England, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, translated by Horace, late Earl of Orford. Edit. of 1797. p. 55.

† "Anglos vidi spiceam ferre domum in Rheda Imaginem circum cantantibus promiscue viris et foeminis, præcedente tibicine aut tympano." Deprav. Rel. Orig. in verbo *Vacina*.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 376. Act v. sc. 1.

mental in getting in the harvest; accordingly Tusser humanely observes,

“ Once ended thy harvest, let none be begilde,  
 please such as did please thee, man, woman and *child* :  
 Thus doing, with alwaie such helpe as they can,  
 thou winnest the praise, of the labouring man;” \*

an injunction which Mr. Hilman has further explained by subjoining to this stanza the following remark: — “ Every one,” says he, “ that did any thing towards the Inning, must now have some reward, as ribbons, laces, rows of pins to boys and girls, if never so small, for their encouragement, and to be sure plumb-pudding.”

The most minute account, however, which we can now any where meet with, of the ceremonies and rejoicings at Harvest-Home, as they existed during the prior part of the seventeenth century, and which we may justly consider as not deviating from those that accompanied the same festival in the reign of Elizabeth, is to be found among the poems of Robert Herriek, and will be valued, not exclusively for its striking illustration of the subject, but for its merit, likewise, as a descriptive piece.

“ THE HOCK-CART, OR HARVEST-HOME. †

COME, Sons of Summer, by whose toile  
 We are the Lords of wine and oile:  
 By whose tough labours, and rough hands,  
 We rip up first, then reap our lands.  
 Crown'd with the eares of corne, now come,  
 And, to the pipe, sing Harvest-home.  
 Come forth, my Lord, and see the cart  
 Drest up with all the country art.  
 See, here a *Maukin*, there a sheet,  
 As spotlesse pure, as it is sweet:

---

\* Tusser Redivivus, p. 104.

† *Hock-cart*,—by this word is meant the *high* or *rejoicing-cart*, and was applied to the last load of corn, as typical of the close of harvest. Thus *Hock-tide* is derived from the Saxon *Hoah-tid*, or high tide, and is expressive of the height of festivity.



The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,  
 Clad, all, in linnen, white as lillies.  
 The Harvest swaines, and wenches bound  
 For joy, to see the *Hock-cart* crown'd.  
 About the cart, heare, how the rout  
 Of rurall younglings raise the shout ;  
 Pressing before, some coming after,  
 These with a shout, and these with laughter.  
 Some blesse the cart ; some kisse the sheaves ;  
 Some prank them up with oaken leaves :  
 Some crosse the fill-horse ; some with great  
 Devotion, stroak the home-borne wheat :  
 While other rusticks, lesse attent  
 To prayers, then to merriment,  
 Run after with their breeches rent.  
 Well, on, brave boyes, to your Lord's hearth,  
 Glitt'ring with fire ; where, for your mirth,  
 Ye shall see first the large and cheefe  
 Foundation of your feast, fat beefe :  
 With upper stories, mutton, veale  
 And bacon, which makes full the meale ;  
 With sev'ral dishes standing by,  
 As here a custard, there a pie,  
 And here all tempting frumentie.  
 And for to make the merry cheere,  
 If smirking wine be wanting here,  
 There's that, which drowns all care, stout beere ;  
 Which freely drink to your Lord's health,  
 Then to the plough, the commonwealth ;  
 Next to your flailles, your fanes, your fats ;  
 Then to the maids with wheaten hats ;  
 To the rough sickle, and crookt sythe,  
 Drink frolick boyes, till all be blythe.  
 Feed, and grow fat ; and as ye eat,  
 Be mindfull, that the lab'ring neat,  
 As you, may have their fill of meat.  
 And know, besides, ye must revoke  
 The patient oxen unto the yoke,  
 And all goe back unto the plough  
 And harrow, though they're hang'd up now.  
 And, you must know, your Lord's word true,  
 Feed him ye must, whose food fils you.  
 And that this pleasure is like raine,  
 Not sent ye for to drowne your paine,  
 But for to make it spring againe.\*

\* Hesperides, p. 113—115.

We must not forget that, during the reign of Elizabeth, another *feast-day* fell to the lot of the husbandman, at the close of wheat-sowing, in October. This was termed, from one of the chief articles provided for the table, *THE SEED-CAKE*, and is no where recorded so distinctly as by the agricultural muse of Tusser : —

“ Wife sometime this week, if the weather hold cleer,  
an end of wheat-sowing, we make for this yeere:  
Remember thou therefore, though I do it not,  
the *seed-cake*, the *pastries*, and *furmenty pot*.” \*

Proceeding with the year, and postponing the consideration of All Hallowmas to the chapter on superstitions, we reach the eleventh of November, or the festival of St. Martin, usually called *MARTINMAS*, or *MARTLEMAS*, a day formerly devoted to feasting and conviviality, and on which a stock of salted provisions was laid in for the winter. This custom of killing cattle, swine, &c. and *curing* them against the approaching season, was, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, common every where, though *now* only partially observed in a few country-villages; for smoke-dried meat in those days was more generally relished than at present. We find Tusser, therefore, as might be expected, recommending this savoury diet; in one place saying to his farmer, —

“ For Easter, at *Martilmas*, hang up a beefe —  
With that and the like, yer grasse beef come in,  
thy folke shall look cheereely, when others look thin ;” †

and again, —

“ *Martilmas* beefe doth bear good tacke,  
When countrey folke do dainties lacke ;” ‡

so, likewise, in *The Pinner of Wakefield*, printed in 1559,

“ A piece of beef hung up since *Martlemas*.”

\* Tusser Redivivus, p. 81.

† Ibid. p. 147.

‡ Ibid. p. 77.



Moresin tells us, in the reign of James I., that there were great rejoicings and feasting on this day throughout Europe, an assertion which is verified by the ancient Calendar of the church of Rome, where under the eleventh of November occur the following observations: — “Martinalia, Geniale Festum. Vina delibantur et defecantur. Vinalia veterum festum huc translatum. Bacchus in Martini figura. — The Martinalia, a genial feast. Wines are tasted of and drawn from the lees. The Vinalia, a feast of the Antients, removed to this day. Bacchus in the figure of Martin.” \* J. Boëmus Aubanus likewise informs us, as Mr. Brand remarks, “that in Franconia, there was a great deal of eating and drinking at this season; no one was so poor or niggardly that on the *Feast of St. Martin* had not his dish of the *entrails* either of *oxen*, *swine*, or *calves*. They drank, too, he says, very liberally of *wine* on the occasion.” †

In this country, merriment and good cheer were equally conspicuous on St. Martin’s feast; the young danced and sang, and the old regaled themselves by the fire-side. A modern poet, who has beautifully copied the antique, under the somewhat stale pretence of discovering an ancient manuscript, presents us with a specimen of his manufacture of considerable merit, under the title of *Martilmasse Daye*; this, as being referred to the age of Elizabeth, and recording, with due attention to historical costume, the mirth and revelry which used formerly to distinguish this period, may be admitted here as a species of traditional evidence of no exceptionable kind. The poem, which is supposed to have been found at Norwich, at an ancient Hostelrie, whilst under repair, consists of six stanzas, two of which, however, though possessing poetical and descriptive point, we have omitted, as not referable to any peculiar observance of the day: —

“ It is the day of Martilmasse,  
Cuppes of ale should freeleie passe;

---

\* Brand on Bourne’s Antiquities, p. 392. note edit. 1810.

† Ibid. p. 393, 394.

What though Wynter-has begunne  
 To push downe the summer sunne,  
 To our fire we can betake  
 And enioie the cracklinge brake,  
 Never heedinge winter's face  
 On the day of Martilmasse. —

Some do the citie now frequent,  
 Where costlie shews and merriment  
 Do weare the vaporish ev'ninge out  
 With interlude and revelling rout;  
 Such as did pleasure Englandes Queene,  
 When here her royal Grace was seene,\*  
 Yet will they not this day let passe,  
 The merrie day of Martilmasse.

Nel hath left her wool at home,  
 The Flanderkin hath stayed his loom,†  
 No beame doth swinge nor wheel go round  
 Upon Gurguntums walled ground; ‡

\* The magnificent reception of Queen Elizabeth at Norwich in 1578, has been recorded with great minuteness, in two tracts, by Bernard Goldingham and Thomas Churchyard the poet, which are reprinted in Mr. Nichols's *Progresses*; these accounts are likewise incorporated by Abraham Fleming as a supplement to Holinshed, and will be found in the last edition of this chronicler, in vol. iv. p. 375. The pomp and pageantry which were exhibited during this regal visit were equally gorgeous, quaint, and operose; "order was taken there," says Churchyard, "that every day, for sixe dayes together, a shew of some strange device should be seene; and the maior and aldermen appointed among themselves and their breethren, that no person reteyning to the Queene, shoulde be unfeasted, or unbidden to dinner and supper, during the space of those sixe dayes: which order was well and wisely observed, and gained their citie more fame and credite, than they wot of: for that courtesie of theirs shall remayne in perpetuall memorie, whiles the walles of their citie standeth." — Nichols's *Progresses of Q. Elizabeth*, vol. ii. p. 56.

† The wise policy of Elizabeth in establishing the Flemings in this country gave birth to our vast superiority in the woollen trade; and the first pageant which met the eyes of Elizabeth on her entrance into Norwich was the *artizan-strangers* pageant, illustrative of the whole process of the manufactory, "a shewe which pleased her Majestie so greatly, as she particularly viewed the knitting and spinning of the children, perused the loombes, and noted the several workes and commodities which were made by these meanes." — Nichols's *Progresses*, vol. ii. p. 13.

‡ Gerguntum, a fabulous kind of Briton, who is supposed to have built Norwich Castle; in the procession which went out of Norwich to meet the Queen, on the 16th of August, 1578, was "one whiche represented King GURGUNT, some tyme king of Englande, whiche buylded the castle of Norwich, called Blanch Flowre, and layde the foundation of the



Where now no anchorite doth dwell  
 To rise and pray at Lenard's bell:  
 Martyn hath kicked at Balaam's ass,  
 So merrie be old Martilmasse.

When the dailie sportes be done,  
 Round the market crosse they runne,  
 Prentis laddes, and gallant blades,  
 Dancinge with their gamesome maids,  
 Till the beadel, stoute and sowre,  
 Shakes his bell, and calls the houre;  
 Then farewell ladde and farewell lasse,  
 To' th' merry night of Martilmasse." \*

Shakspeare has an allusion to this formerly convivial day in the *Second Part of King Henry IV.*, where Poins, asking Bardolph after Falstaff, says: "How doth the *martlemas*, your master?" an epithet by which, as Johnson observes, he means the latter spring, or the old fellow with juvenile passions. †

We have now to record the closing and certainly the greatest festival of the year, the celebration of CHRISTMAS, a period which our ancestors were accustomed to devote to hospitality on a very large scale, to the indulgence indeed of hilarity and good cheer for, at least, twelve days, and sometimes, especially among the lower ranks, for six weeks.

Christmas was always ushered in by the due observance of its *Eve*, first in a religious and then in a festive point of view. "Our forefathers," remarks Bourne, "when the common devotions of the *Eve* were over, and night was come on, were wont to light up *candles* of an uncommon size, which were called *Christmas-candles*, and to lay a

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citie. He was mounted upon a brave courser, and was thus furnished: his body armed, his bases of greene and white silke; on his head a black velvet hat, with a plume of white feathers. There attended upon him three henchmen in white and greene: one of them did beare his helmet, the seconde his tergat, the thirde his staffe." — Nichols's Progresses, vol. ii. p. 5, 6.

\* The Cabinet, vol. ii. p. 75, 76.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 66.

log of wood upon the fire, which they termed a *Yule-clog*, or Christmas-block. These were to illuminate the house, and turn the night into day; which custom, in some measure, is still kept up in the northern parts." \*

This mode of rejoicing, at the winter solstice, appears to have originated with the Danes and Pagan Saxons, and was intended to be emblematical of the return of the sun, and its increasing light and heat; *gehol* or *Geol*, Angl. Sax. *Jel*, *Jul*, *Huil*, or *Yule*, Dan. Sax. Swed., implying the idea of *revolution* or of *wheel*, and not only designating, among these northern nations, the month of December, called *Jul-Month*, but the great feast also of this period. † On the introduction of Christianity, the illuminations of the *Eve of Yule* were continued as representative of the *true light* which was then ushered into the world, in the person of our Saviour, the *Day spring from on High*.

The ceremonies and festivities which were observed on Christmas-Eve during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which in some parts of the north have been partially continued, until within these last thirty years, consisted in bringing into the house, with much parade and with vocal and instrumental harmony, the *Yule* or *Christmas-block*, a massy piece of fire-wood, frequently the enormous root of a tree, and which was usually supplied by the carpenter attached to the family. This being placed in the centre of the great hall, each of the family, in turn, sate down upon it, sung a *Yule-Song*, and drank to a *merry Christmas* and a *happy new year*. It was then placed on the large open hearth in the hall chimney, and, being lighted with the last year's brand, carefully preserved for this express purpose, the music again struck up, when the addition of fuel already inflamed, expedited the process, and occasioned a brilliant conflagration. The family and their friends were then feasted with *Yule-Dough* or *Yule-cakes*, on which were impressed the figure of the child

\* Bourne's Antiquities, p. 172.

† A great display of literature on the etymon of the word *Yule* will be found in the *Allegories Orientales* of M. Count de Gebelin, Paris, 1773.



Jesus ; and with bowls of *frumenty*, made from wheat cakes or creed wheat, boiled in milk, with sugar, nutmeg, &c. To these succeeded tankards of spiced ale, while preparations were usually going on among the domestics for the hospitalities of the succeeding day.

In the curious collection of Herrick is preserved a poem descriptive of some of these observances, and which was probably written for the express purpose of being sung during the kindling of the Yule-clog.

“ COME, bring with a noise,  
My merrie, merrie boyes,  
The Christmas Log to the firing ;  
While my good Dame, she  
Bids ye all be free,  
And drink to your hearts desiring.

With the last yeere's brand  
Light the new block, and  
For good success in his spending,  
On your psalteries play,  
That sweet luck may  
Come while the Log is a teending. \*

Drink now the strong beere,  
Cut the white loafe here, †  
The while the meat is a shredding  
For the rare mince-pie,  
And the plums stand by  
To fill the paste that's a kneading.” ‡

It was customary on this *eve*, likewise, to decorate the windows of every house, from the nobleman's seat to the cottage, with bay, laurel, ivy, and holly leaves, which were continued during the whole of the Christmas-holidays, and frequently until Candlemas. Stowe, in his Survey of London, particularly mentions this observance : —

\* *Teending*, a word derived from the Saxon, means *kindling*.

† *White-loafe*, sometimes called at this period *wastel-bread* or cake, from the French *wastiaux*, pastry ; implied white bread well or twice baked, and was considered as a delicacy.

‡ Hesperides, p. 309, 310.

“ Against the feast of *Christmas*,” says he, “ every man’s house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holm, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeere aforded to be greene: The conduits and standards in the streetes were likewise garnished. Amongst the which, I read, that in the yeere 1444, by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the first of February at night, Paul’s steeple was fired, but with great labour quenched, and toward the morning of Candlemas day, at the Leaden Hall in Cornhill, a standard of tree, beeing set up in the midst of the pavement fast in the ground, nayled full of holme and ivy, for disport of Christmas to the people; was torne up, and cast downe by the *malignant spirit* (as was thought) and the stones of the pavement all about were cast in the streetes, and into divers houses, so that the people were sore agast at the great tempests.” \*

This custom, which still prevails in many parts of the kingdom, especially in our parish-churches, is probably founded on a very natural idea, that whatever is green, at this bleak season of the year, may be considered as emblematic of joy and victory, more particularly the laurel, which had been adopted by the Greeks and Romans, for this express purpose. That this was the opinion of our ancestors, and that they believed the *malignant spirit* was envious of, and interested in destroying these symbols of their triumph, appears from the passage just quoted from Stowe.

It has been, indeed, conjectured, that this mode of ornamenting churches and houses is either allusive to numerous figurative expressions in the prophetic Scriptures typical of Christ, as the *Branch of Righteousness*, or that it was commemorative of the style in which the first Christian churches in this country were built, the materials for the erection of which being usually *wrythen wands or boughs*†; it may have, however, an origin still more remote, and fancy may trace the misletoe, which is frequently used on these occasions, to the

\* Stowe’s Survey of London, 4to. edit., 1618, p. 149, 150.

† Vide Gentleman’s Magazine for 1765.



times of the ancient Druids, an hypothesis which acquires some probability from a passage in Dr. Chandler's *Travels in Greece*, where he informs us, "It is related where Druidism prevailed, the *houses* were *decked* with *evergreens* in *December*, that the Sylvan spirits might repair to them, and remain unnipped with frost and cold winds, until a milder season had renewed the foliage of their darling abodes." \*

The morning of the Nativity was ushered in with the chaunting of *Christmas Carols*, or *Pious Chansons*. *The Christmas Carol* was either *scriptural* or *convivial*, the first being sung morning and evening, until the twelfth day, and the second during the period of feasting or carousing.

"As soon as the morning of the Nativity appears," says Bourne, "it is customary among the common people to sing a *Christmas Carol*, which is a song upon the birth of our Saviour, and generally sung from the Nativity to the Twelfth-day; this custom," he adds, "seems to be an imitation of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, or *Glory be to God on High*, &c. which was sung by the angels, as they hovered o'er the fields of Bethlehem on the morning of the Nativity; for even that song, as the learned Bishop Taylor observes, was a Christmas Carol. As soon, says he, as these blessed Choristers had sung their Xmas Carol, and taught the Church a hymn, to put into her offices for ever, on the anniversary of this festivity; the angels," &c. † We can well remember that, during the early period of our life, which was spent in the north of England, it was in general use for the young people to sing a *carol* early on the morning of this great festival, and the burthen of which was,

"All the angels in heaven do sing  
On a Christmas day in the morning;"

customs such as this, laudable in themselves and highly impressive on

\* Brand on Bourne's *Antiquities*, p. 193. † Ibid. p. 200, 201.

“ Lordings, from a distant home,  
 To seek old CHRISTMAS we are come,  
 Who loves our minstrelsy:  
 And here, unless report mis-say,  
 The grey-beard dwells; and on this day  
 Keeps yearly wassel, ever gay,  
 With festive mirth and glee.

Lordings list, for we tell you true;  
 CHRISTMAS loves the jolly crew  
 That cloudy care defy:  
 His liberal board is deftly spread  
 With manchet loaves and wastel-bread;  
 His guests with fish and flesh are fed,  
 Nor lack the stately pye.

Lordings, it is our hosts' command,  
 And Christmas joins him hand in hand,  
 To drain the brimming bowl:  
 And I'll be foremost to obey:  
 Then pledge me sirs, and drink away,  
 For CHRISTMAS revels here to day  
 And sways without controul.

Now *Wassel* to you all! and merry may ye be!  
 But foul that wight befall, who *Drinks not Health* to me!” \*

*Manchet loaves, wastel-bread, and the stately pye*, that is, a *peacock* or *pheasant pye*, were still common in the days of Shakspeare. During the prevalence of chivalry, it was usual for the knights to take their vows of enterprise, at a solemn feast, on the presentation to each knight, in turn, of a roasted peacock in a golden dish. For this was afterwards substituted, though only in a culinary light, and as the most magnificent dish which could be brought to table, a peacock in a pie, preserving as much as possible the form of the bird, with the head elevated above the crust, the beak richly gilt, and the beautiful tail spread out to its full extent. In allusion to these superb dishes a ludicrous oath was prevalent in Shakspeare's time, which he has, with much propriety, put into the mouth of Justice Shallow, who, soliciting the stay of the fat knight, exclaims,

\* Douce's Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 215—217. 219.



“ By cock and pye, sir, you shall not away to night.” \*

The use of the peacock, however, as one of the articles of a second course, continued to the close of the seventeenth century ; for Gervase Markham, in the ninth edition of his *English House-Wife*, London 1683, enumerating the articles and ordering of a *great feast*, mentions this, among other birds, now seldom seen as objects of cookery ; “ then in the second course she shall first prefer the lesser wild-fowl, as &c. then the lesser land-fowl as &c. &c. then the great wild-fowl, as *bittern, hearn, shoveler, crane*, bustard, and such like. Then the greater land-fowl, as PEACOCKS, phesant, *puets, gulls*, &c.” †

Numerous collections of *Carols*, or *festal chansons*, to be sung at the various feasts and ceremonies of the Christmas-holidays, were published during the sixteenth century. One of the earliest of these was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521, and entitled *Christmasse carolles*. It contains, among many very curious specimens of this species of popular poetry, one, which not only contributed to the hilarity of our ancestors in the reigns of Henry, Elizabeth, and James, but is still in use, though with many alterations, in Queen’s College, Oxford ; it is designated as *a Carol bryngyng in the bores head*, which was the first dish served up at the baron’s high table in the great hall on Christmas-day, and was usually accompanied by a procession, with the sound of trumpets and other instruments.

“ *Caput Apri defero,  
Reddens laudes Domino.*

The bores head in hande bringe I,  
With garlandes gay and rosemary.  
I pray you all synge merily,  
*Qui estis in convivio.*

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\* Act v. sc. 1. Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 213.

† *English House-Wife*, p. 99. The pies which he recommends immediately subsequent to this enumeration are somewhat curious, and rather of a more substantial nature than those of modern days ; for instance, *red-deer pye, gammon of bacon pye, wild-bore pye*, and *roe-pye*.

The bores head, I understande,  
Is the chefe servyce in this lande:  
Loke wherever it be fande

*Servite cum cantico.*

Be gladde lordes, both more and lasse,  
For this hath ordayned our stewarde  
To chere you all this christmasse,  
The bores head with mustarde." \*

For the hospitality, indeed, the merriment and good cheer, which prevailed during the season of Christmas, this country was peculiarly distinguished in the sixteenth century. Setting aside the splendid manner in which this festival was kept at court, and in the capital, we may appeal to the country, in confirmation of the assertion; the hall of the nobleman and country-gentleman, and even the humbler mansions of the yeoman and husbandman, vied with the city in the exhibition of plenty, revelry, and sport. Of the mode in which the farmer and his servants enjoyed themselves, on this occasion, a good idea may be formed from the poem of Tusser, the first edition of which thus admonishes the housewife:—

“ Get ivye and hull, woman deck up thyne house:  
and take this same brawne, for to seeth and to souse.  
Provide us good chere, for thou know'st the old guise:  
olde customes, that good be, let no man despise.

At Christmas be mery, and thanke god of all  
and feast thy pore neighbours, the great with the small.” †

And in subsequent impressions, the articles of the *Christmas husbandlie fare* are more particularly enumerated; for instance, good drinke, a blazing fire in the hall, brawne, pudding and souse, and mustard *with all*, beef, mutton, and pork, shred or minced pies *of the best*, pig, veal, goose, capon, and turkey, cheese, apples, and nuts, with *jolie carols*; a pretty ample provision for the rites of hospitality, and a powerful security against the inclemencies of the season!

\* Vide Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 143.

† A hundreth good poyntes of husbandry, 1557. p. 10.



The Hall of the baron, knight, or squire, was the seat of the same festivities, the same gambols, wassalling, mummary, and mirth, which usually took place in the palaces and mansions of the metropolis, and of these Jonson has given us a very curious epitome in his *Masque of Christmas*, where he has personified the season and its attributes in the following manner :

“ *Enter CHRISTMAS with two or three of the Guard.*

“ He is attir’d in round hose, long stockings, a close doublet, a high crown’d hat with a broach, a long thin beard, a truncheon, little ruffles, white shoes, his scarffes, and garters tyed crosse, and his drum beaten before him. —

“ The names of his CHILDREN, with their attyres.

“ *Mis-rule.* In a velvet cap with a sprig, a short cloake, great yellow ruffe like a reveller, his torch-bearer bearing a rope, a cheese and a basket.

“ *Caroll.* A long tawny coat, with a red cap, and a flute at his girdle, his torch-bearer carrying a song booke open.

“ *Minc’d Pie.* Like a fine cooke’s wife, drest neat ; her man carrying a pie, dish, and spoones.

“ *Gamboll.* Like a tumbler, with a hoope and bells ; his torch-bearer arm’d with a cole-staffe, and a blinding cloth.

“ *Post And Paire.* With a paire-royall of aces in his hat ; his garment all done over with payres, and purrs ; his squier carrying a box, cards and counters.

“ *New-Yeares-Gift.* In a blew coat, serving-man like, with an orange, and a sprig of rosemarie guilt on his head, his hat full of broaches, with a collar of gingerbread, his torch-bearer carrying a march-paine, with a bottle of wine on either arme.

“ *Mumming.* In a masquing pied suite, with a visor, his torch-bearer carrying the boxe, and ringing it.

“ *Wassall.* Like a neat sempster, and songster ; her page bearing a browne bowle, drest with ribbands, and rosemarie before her.

“ *Offering.* In a short gowne, with a porter’s staffe in his hand ; a wyth borne before him, and a bason by his torch-bearer.

“ *Babie-Coche.* Drest like a boy, in a fine long coat, biggin, bib, muckender, and a little dagger ; his usher bearing a great cake with a beane, and a pease.” \*

Of these personified attributes we have already noticed, at some length, the most material, such as *Misrule*, *Caroll*, *New-Year’s-Gift* and *Wassall* ; to the account, however, which has been given of the Summer Lord of Misrule, from Stubbes’s *Anatomie of Abuses*, it

\* Christmas, His Masque ; as it was presented at Court 1616. Jonson’s Works, folio edit. 1640. vol. ii.

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will be here necessary to add, that the sway of this mock prince, both in town and country, was still more absolute during the Christmas-holidays; "what time," says Holinshed, "of old ordinarie course there is alwaies one appointed to make sport in the court, called commonlie Lord of Misrule: whose office is not unknowne to such as have beene brought up in noblemen's houses, and among great house-keepers, which use liberal feasting in that season." \* Stowe, likewise, has recorded, in his Survey, the universal domination of this holiday monarch. "In the feast of Christmas," he remarks, "there was in the king's house, wheresoever he was lodged, a *Lord of Misrule*, or *Master of merry desports*, and the like had yee in the house of every nobleman of honour, or good worship, were he spirituall or temporall. Amongst the which, the Maier of London, and either of the Sheriffes had their severall Lords of Misrule, ever contending without quarrell or offence, who should make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholders. These Lords beginning their rule on Alhallow Eve, continued the same til the morrow after the feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas-day: In all which space, there were fine and subtill disguisings, maskes and mummeries, with playing at cardes for counters, nayles and points *in every house*, more for pastime than for gaine." †

In short, the directions which are to be found for a grand Christmas in the capital, were copied with equal splendour and profusion in the houses of the opulent gentlemen in the country, who made it a point to be even lavish at this season of the year. We may, therefore, consider the following description as applying accurately to the Christmas hospitality of the Baron's hall.

"On Christmas-day, service in the church ended, the gentlemen presently repair into the hall to breakfast, with brawn, mustard, and malmsey.

"At dinner the butler, appointed for the Christmas, is to see the tables covered and furnished: and the ordinary butlers of the house

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, vol. iii. p. 1032. edit. 1808.

† Stowe's Survey of London, p. 149. edit. 1618.



are decently to set bread, napkins, and trenchers, in good form, at every table ; with spoones and knives. At the first course is served in a fair and large bore's head, upon a silver platter, with minstralsye.

"Two 'servants' are to attend at supper, and to bear two fair torches of wax, next before the musicians and trumpeters, and stand above the fire with the music, till the first course be served in through the hall. Which performed, they, with the musick, are to return into the buttry. The like course is to be observed in all things, during the time of Christmas.

"At night, before supper, are revels and dancing, and so also after supper, during the twelve daies of Christmas. The Master of the Revels is, after dinner and supper, to sing a caroll, or song ; and command other gentlemen then there present to sing with him and the company ; and so it is very decently performed."\*

Beside the revelry and dancing here mentioned, we may add, that it was customary, at this season, after the Christmas sports and games had been indulged in, until the performers were weary, to gather round the ruddy fire, and tell tales of legendary lore, or popular superstition. Herrick, recording the diversions of this period, mentions one of them as consisting of "winter's tales about the hearth † ;" and Grose, speaking of the source whence he had derived many of the superstitions narrated in the concluding section of his "Provincial Glossary," says, that he gives them, as they had, from age to age, been "related to a closing circle of attentive hearers, assembled in a winter's evening, round the capacious chimney of an old hall or manor-house ;" and he adds, that tales of this description formed, among our ancestors, "a principal part of rural conversation, in all large assemblies, *and particularly those in Christmas holidays, during the burning of the Yule-block.*" ‡

Of the conviviality which universally reigned during these holidays, a good estimate may be taken by a few lines from the author of Hes-

\* Nichols's Progresses and Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. p. 20, 21. Anno 1562.

† Hesperides, p. 145.

‡ Provincial Glossary, Preface, p. 8. 8vo. 1787.

perides, who, addressing a friend at Christmas-tide, makes the following request :

————— “ When your faces shine  
 With bucksome meat and cap’ring wine,  
 Remember us in cups full crown’d, —  
 Untill the fired chesnuts leape  
 For joy, to see the fruits ye reape  
 From the plumpe challice, and the cup,  
 That tempts till it be tossed up : —  
 ——— carouse  
 Till Liber Pater \* twirles the house  
 About your eares ; —  
 “ Then” to the bagpipe all addresse,  
 Till sleep takes place of wearinesse :  
 And thus throughout, with Christmas playes,  
 Frolick the full twelve holy-dayes.” †

\* *Liber Pater*, Bacchus.

† Hesperides, p. 146. The following passages place in a strong and interesting point of view, the hospitality of our ancestors during this season of the year, and will add not a little to the impression derived from the text.

“ Heretofore, noblemen and gentlemen of fair estates had their heralds who wore their coate of armes at Christmas, and at other solemne times, and cryed largesse thrice. They lived in the country like petty kings. They always eat in Gothic Halls where the Mummings and Loaf-stealing, and other Christmas sports, were performed. The hearth was commonly in the middle ; whence the saying, *round about our coal-fire*.” Antiquarian Repertory, No. xxvi. from the MS. Collections of Aubrey, dated 1678.

“ An English Gentleman at the opening of the great day, *i. e.* on Christmas Day in the morning, had all his tenants and neighbours entered his Hall by day-break. The strong beer was broached, and the black jacks went plentifully about with toast, sugar, nutmegg, and good Cheshire cheese. The Hackin, (the great sausage) must be boiled by day-break, or else two young men must take the maiden (*i. e.* the cook,) by the arms and run her round the market place till she is ashamed of her laziness.

“ In Christmass Holidays, the tables were all spread from the first to the last ; the sirloins of beef, the minced pies, the plumb-porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plumb-puddings, were all brought upon the board : every one eat heartily, and was welcome, which gave rise to the proverb, ‘ Merry in the hall when beards wag all.’ From a Tract entitled “ Round about our Coal-Fire, or Christmas Entertainments ;” of which the first edition was published, I believe, about the close of the seventeenth century.

“ Our ancestors considered Christmas in the double light of a holy commemoration and a chearful festival ; and accordingly distinguished it by devotion, by vacation from business, by merriment and hospitality. They seemed eagerly bent to make themselves and every body about them happy. — The great hall resounded with the tumultuous joys



We shall close this detail of the ceremonies and festivities of Christmas with a passage from the descriptive muse of Mr. Walter Scott, in which he has collected, with his usual accuracy, and with his almost unequalled power of costume-painting, nearly all the striking circumstances which distinguished the celebration of this high festival, from an early period, to the close of the sixteenth century. They form a picture which must delight, both from the nature of its subject, and from the truth and mellowness of its colouring.

— “ Well our Christian sires of old  
 Loved when the year its course had rolled,  
 And brought blithe Christmas back again,  
 With all his hospitable train.  
 Domestic and religious rite  
 Gave honour to the holy night :  
 On Christmas eve the bells were rung ; —  
 The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;  
 The hall was dressed with holly green ;  
 Forth to the wood did merry-men go,  
 To gather in the misletoe.  
 Then opened wide the baron’s hall  
 To vassal, tenant, serf and all ;  
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
 And Ceremony doffed his pride.  
 The heir with roses in his shoes,  
 That night might village partner chuse ;  
 The lord, underogating, share  
 The vulgar game of “ post and pair.”  
 All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,  
 And general voice, the happy night,  
 That to the cottage, as the crown,  
 Brought tidings of salvation down.  
 The fire with well-dried logs supplied,  
 Went roaring up the chimney wide ;  
 The huge hall-table’s oaken face,  
 Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,  
 Bore then upon its massive board  
 No mark to part the squire and lord.

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of servants and tenants, and the gambols they played served as amusement to the lord of the mansion and his family, who, by encouraging every art conducive to mirth and entertainment, endeavoured to soften the rigour of the season, and mitigate the influence of winter.” — *The World*, No. 104.

Then was brought in the lusty brawn,  
 By old blue-coated serving-man ;  
 Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,  
 Crested with bays and rosemary.  
 Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,  
 How, when, and where, the monster fell ;  
 What dogs before his death he tore,  
 And all the baiting of the boar.  
 The wassol round, in good brown bowls,  
 Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.  
 There the huge sirloin reeked : hard by  
 Plumb-porridge stood, and Christmas pye ;  
 Nor failed old Scotland to produce,  
 At such high tide, her savoury goose.  
 Then came the merry masquers in,  
 And carols roared with blithesome din ;  
 If unmelodious was the song,  
 It was a hearty note, and strong.  
 Who lists may in their mumming see  
 Traces of ancient mystery ;  
 White shirts supplied the masquerade,  
 And smutted cheeks the visors made ;  
 But, O ! what masquers, richly dight,  
 Can boast of bosoms half so light !  
 England was merry England, when  
 Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
 'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale ;  
 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;  
 A Christmas gambol oft could cheer  
 The poor man's heart through half the year."\*

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\* Scott's Marmion. Introduction to Canto Sixth. 8vo. edit. p. 300—303.

" At present, Christmas meetings," remarks Mr. Brady, " are chiefly confined to family parties, happy, it must be confessed, though less jovial in their nature ; perhaps, too, less beneficial to society, because they can be enjoyed on other days not, as originally was the case, set apart for more general conviviality and sociability ; not such as our old ballads proclaim, and history confirms, in which the most frigid tempers gave way to relaxation, and all in eager joy were ready to exclaim, in honour of the festivity, —

" For, since such delights are thine,  
 CHRISTMAS, with thy bands I join."

*Clavis Calendaria*, vol. ii. p. 319.



## CHAPTER VII.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY CONTINUED — WAKES — FAIRS — WEDDINGS  
— BURIALS.

HAVING described, in as brief a manner as was consistent with the nature of our work, the various circumstances accompanying the celebration of the most remarkable holidays and festivals, in the country, during the age of Shakspeare, from whose inimitable compositions we have drawn many pertinent illustrations on nearly all the subjects as they passed before us; we shall proceed, in the present chapter, to notice those remaining topics which are calculated to complete, on the scale adopted, a tolerably correct view of rural manners and customs, as they existed in the latter half of the sixteenth, and prior portion of the seventeenth, century.

A natural transition will carry us, from the description of the rural festival, to the gaieties of the WAKE or FAIR. Of these terms, indeed, the former originally implied the vigil which preceded the festival in honour of the Saint to whom the parish-church was dedicated; for “on the Eve of this day,” remarks Mr. Borlase, in his Cornwall, “prayers were said, and hymns were sung all night in the church; and from these watchings the festivals were stiled *Wakes*; which name still continues in many parts of England, though the vigils have been long abolished.”\* The religious institution, however, of the *Wake*, whether held on the vigil or Saint’s day, was soon forgotten; mirth and feasting early became the chief objects of this meeting †, and it, at length, degenerated into something approach-

\* Brand on Bourne’s Antiquities, p. 333.

† Mr. Strutt, in a quotation from an old MS. legend of St. John the Baptist, preserved in Dugdale’s Warwickshire, tells us, — “In the beginning of holi churche, it was so that the pepul cam to the chirche with candellys brinnyng, and wold *wake* and comme with Light toward the chirche in their devotions, and after they fell to lecherie and songs, daunces, harping, piping, and also to glotony and sinne, &c.”— Sports and Pastimes, p. 322.

ing towards a secular Fair. These Wakes or Fairs, which were rendered more popular in proportion as they deviated from their devotional origin, were, until the reign of Henry the Sixth, always held on a Sunday and its eve, a custom that continued to be partially observed as late as the middle of the seventeenth century; hence ale-houses, and places of public resort, in the immediate neighbourhood of church-yards, the former scene of Wakes, were still common at the close of Shakspeare's life; thus Sir Thomas Overbury, describing a Sexton, in his *Characters*, published in 1616, says: "At every church-style commonly there's an ale-house; where let him (the Sexton) bee found never so idle-pated, hee is still a grave drunkard."

The increasing licentiousness and conviviality, however, which attended these church-yard assemblies, frequented as they were by pedlars and hawkers of every description, finally occasioned their suppression in all places, at least, where much traffic was expected. In their room regular Fairs were established, to which in central or peculiar stations, the resort, at fixed periods, was immense.

Yet the *Wake*, the meeting for mere festivity and frolic, still continued in every village and small town, and though not preceded by any vigil in the church, was popularly termed the *Wake-Day*. Tusser, in his catalogue of the "Old Guise," has not forgotten this season of merriment; on the contrary, he seems to welcome its return with much cordiality:—

" Fil oven ful of flawnes, Ginnie passe not for sleepe,  
to morrow thy fater his wake-daie wil keepe:  
Then every wanton may danse at hir wil,  
both Tomkin and Tomlin, and Jankin with Gil."\*

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"It appears," says Mr. Brand, "that in antient times the parishioners brought *rushes* at the Feast of Dedication, wherewith to strew the Church, and from that circumstance the Festivity itself has obtained the name of *Rush-bearing*, which occurs for a Country-Wake in a Glossary to the Lancashire dialect."—Brand ap. Ellis, vol. i. p. 436.

\* Hilman's Tusser, p. 81.



Mr. Hilman, in his edition of Tusser, has made the following observations on this passage. — “Waking in the church,” says he, “was left off because of some abuses, and we see here it was converted to wakeing at the oven. The other continued down to our author’s days, and in a great many places continues still to be observed with all sorts of rural merriments; such as dancing, wrestling, cudgel-playing, &c.” Bourne observes, that the feasting and sporting, on this occasion, usually lasted for two or three days\*; and Bishop Hall gives an impressive idea of the revelry and glee which distinguished these rural assemblages, when he exclaims, “What should I speak of our *merry Wakes*, and May games—in all which put together, you may well say, no Greek can be *merrier* than they.”† Indeed from one end of the kingdom to the other, from north to south, it would appear, that, among the country-villages, during the reigns of Elizabeth and her two immediate successors, Wakes formed one of the principal amusements of the peasantry, and were anticipated with much eagerness and expectation. In confirmation of this we need only remark that Drayton, speaking of Lancashire, declares, that

— “every village smokes at *wakes* with lusty cheer;”‡

and that Herrick, in Devonshire, has written a very curious little poem, entitled *The Wake*, which, as strikingly descriptive of the various business of this festivity, claims here an introduction:—

“Come Anthea, let us two  
Go to feast, as others do.  
Tarts and custards, creams and cakes,  
Are the junketts still at *Wakes*:  
Unto which the tribes resort,  
Where the businesse is the sport:  
Morris-dancers thou shalt see,  
Marian too in pagentrie:

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\* Bourne’s Antiquit. Vulg. p. 330.

† Triumph of Pleasure, p. 23.

‡ Chalmers’s Poets, vol. iv. p. 378. Poly-Olbion, Song xxvii.

And a Mimick to devise  
 Many grinning properties.  
 Players there will be, and those  
 Base in action as in clothes :  
 Yet with strutting they will please  
 The incurious villages.  
 Neer the dying of the day,  
 There will be a cudgell-play,  
 Where a coxcomb will be broke,  
 Ere a good *word* can be spoke :  
 But the anger ends all here,  
 Drencht in ale, or drown'd in beere.  
 Happy Rusticks, best content  
 With the cheapest merriment :  
 And possesse no other feare,  
 Than to want the *Wake* next yeare." \*

Of the pedlars or hawkers who, in general, formed a constituent part of these *village-wakes* an accurate idea may be drawn from the character of the pedlar Autolycus, in the *Winter's Tale* of Shakspeare, who is delineated with the poet's customary strength of pencil, rich humour, and fidelity to nature. The wares in which he dealt are curiously enumerated in the following passages : —

" *Serv.* He hath songs, for men, or women, of all sizes; no milliner can so fit his customers with gloves †: he has the prettiest love-songs for maids; he hath ribands of all the colours i' the rainbow; points more than all the lawyers in Bohemia can learnedly handle, though they come to him by the gross; inkles, caddisses ‡, cambricks, lawns: why, he sings them over, as they were gods or goddesses: you would think, a smock were a she-angel; he so chants to the sleeve-hand, and the work about the square on't." §

" *Enter Autolycus, singing.*

" Lawn, as white as driven snow;  
 Cyprus, black as e'er was crow;

\* *Hesperides*, p. 300, 301.

† In Shakspeare's time the business of the milliner was transacted by men.

‡ *Caddisses*, — a kind of narrow worsted galloon.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 345, 347, 348.



Gloves as sweet as damask roses;  
 Masks for faces, and for noses;  
 Bugle bracelet, necklace-amber,  
 Perfume for a lady's chamber:  
 Golden quoifs, and stomachers,  
 For my lads to give their dears;  
 Pins and poking-sticks of steel,  
 What maids lack from head to heel:  
 Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;  
 Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry:  
 Come buy, &c." \*

At the close of the feast Autolycus is represented as re-entering, and declaring "Ha, ha! what a fool honesty is! and trust, his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman! I have sold all my trumpery; not a counterfeit stone, not a riband, glass, pomander†, brooch, table-book, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoe-tye, bracelet, horn-ring, to keep my pack from fasting: they throng who should buy first; as if my trinkets had been hallowed, and brought a benediction to the buyer." ‡

In the North, the Village-Wake is still kept up, under the title of *The Hopping*, a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and thus applied, because dancing was the favourite amusement of these meetings. The reign of Elizabeth, indeed, was marked by a peculiar propensity to this exercise, and neither wake nor feast could be properly celebrated without the country lads and lasses footing it on the green or yard, or in bad weather, in the Manor-hall.

In an old play, entitled "A Woman Killed With Kindness," the production of Thomas Heywood, and acted in 1604, is to be found a very humorous description of one of these *Hoppings*, and particularly curious, as it enumerates the names of the dances then in vogue

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 349.

† *Pomander*, — a little ball of perfumes worn either in the pocket or about the neck.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 375, 376.

among these rustic performers. The poet, after remarking that now

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“ the mad lads  
And country lasses, every mother's child,  
With nosegays and bride laces in their hats,  
Dance all their country measures, rounds and jigs,”

thus introduces his couples :

“ *Jenkin.* Come, Nick, take you Joan Miniver to trace withal ; Jack Slime, traverse you with Sisly Milk-pail ; I will take Jane Trubkin, and Roger Brickbat shall have Isabel Motley ; and now strike up ; we'll have a crash here in the yard. —

*Jack Slime.* Foot it quickly ; if the music overcome not my melancholy, I shall quarrel ; and if they do not suddenly strike up, I shall presently strike them down.

*Jen.* No quarrelling, for God's sake : truly, if you do, I shall set a knave between ye.

*Jack Slime.* I come to dance, not to quarrel ; come, what shall it be ? Rogero ?

*Jen.* Rogero ! no ; we will dance ‘ The Beginning of the World.’

*Sisly.* I love to dance so well, as ‘ John, come kiss me now.’

*Nicholas.* I have ere now deserved a cushion ; call for the Cushion-dance.

*R. Brick.* For my part, I like nothing so well as ‘ Tom Tyler.’

*Jen.* No ; we'll have ‘ The hunting of the Fox.’

*Jack Slime.* ‘ The Hay ! the Hay ! ’ there's nothing like ‘ The Hay.’

*Nich.* I have said, do say, and will say again.

*Jen.* Every man agree to have it as Nick says.

*All.* Content.

*Nich.* It hath been, it now is, and it shall be.

*Sisly.* What ? Mr. Nicholas ? What ?

*Nich.* ‘ Put on your smock, a Monday.’

*Jen.* So, the dance will come cleanly off : come, for God's sake, agree of something ; if you like not that, put it to the musicians ; or let me speak for all, and we'll have ‘ Sellenger's Round.’

*All.* That, that, that !

*Nich.* No, I am resolved, thus it shall be. First take hands, then take ye to your heels.

*Jen.* Why, would you have us run away ?

*Nich.* No ; but I would have you shake your heels. Music, strike up.

*They dance.\**

The *Fair* or greater wake was usually held, as hath been observed, in a central situation, and its period and duration were, as at present,

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 435, 436. The third edition of *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, was printed in 4to. 1617.



proclaimed by law. It was a scene of extensive business as well as of pleasure; for before provincial cities had attained either wealth or consequence, all communication between them was difficult, and neither the necessaries nor the elegances of life could be procured but at stated times, and at fixed depôts. It was usual, therefore, to go fifty or a hundred miles to one of these fairs, in order both to purchase goods and accommodations for the ensuing year, and to dispose of the superfluous products of art or cultivation. In the reign of Henry VI. the monks of the priories of Maxtoke in Warwickshire, and of Bicester in Oxfordshire, laid in their annual stores of common necessities at Sturbridge Fair in Cambridgeshire, at least one hundred miles distant, and notwithstanding the two cities of Oxford and Coventry were in their immediate neighbourhood.\* In the reign of Henry VIII., it appears, from the Household-Book of Henry Percy, fifth Earl of Northumberland, that His Lordship's family were supplied with necessities for the whole year from fairs. "He that stands charged with my Lordes House for the houll Yeir, if he maye possible, shall be at all Faïres, where the greice Emptions shall be boughte for the House for the houll Yeir, as Wine, Wax, Beïffes, Muttons, Wheite and Malt †;" and, in the reign of Elizabeth, Tusser recommends to his farmer the same plan, both for purchase and sale:

"At Bartilmewtide, or at Sturbridge faire,  
buie that as is needful, thy house to repaire:  
Then sel to thy profit, both butter and cheese,  
who buieth it sooner, the more he shall leese." ‡

That this custom prevailed until the commencement of the eighteenth century, and to nearly the same extent, is evident from a note on the just quoted lines of Tusser by Mr. Hilman. "Sturbridge Fair," says he, "stocks the country (namely, Norfolk, Suffolk, and

\* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 279. note.

† Establishment and Expences of the Houshold of Henry Percy, the fifth Earl of Northumberland, A. D. 1512. p. 407.

‡ Hilman's Tusser, p. 110.

Essex,) with clothes, and all other household necessities; and they (the farmers) again, sell their butter and cheese, and whatever else remains on their hands; nay, there the shopkeepers supply themselves with divers sorts of commodities."

In the third year, indeed, of James I., Sturbridge Fair began to acquire such celebrity, that hackney coaches attended it from London; and it subsequently became so extensive that for several years not less than sixty coaches have been known to ply at this fair, then esteemed the largest in England.

Sturbridge Fair is still annually proclaimed, but now in such a state of decline, that its extinction, at least in a commercial light, cannot be far distant.

To these brief notices of wakes and fairs, it may be necessary to subjoin a slight detail of the state of *Country-Inns* and Ale-houses during the age of Shakspeare.

To "take mine ease in mine inn" is a proverbial phrase, which the poet has placed in the mouth of Falstaff\*, and which implies a degree of comfort which has always been the peculiar attribute of an English house of public entertainment. That it was not less felt and enjoyed in Shakspeare's time than in our own, is very apparent from the accounts which have been left us by Harrison and Fynes Moryson; the former writing towards the close of the sixteenth, and the latter at the commencement of the seventeenth century. These descriptions, which are curiously faithful and highly interesting, paint the provincial hostelrys of England as in a most flourishing state, and, according to Harrison, indeed, greatly superior to those which existed in the metropolis.

"Those townes," says the historian, "that we call thorowfares, have great and sumptuous innes builded in them, for the receiving of such travellers and strangers as passe to and fro. The manner of harbouring wherein, is not like to that of some other countries, in which the host or goodman of the house dooth challenge a lordlie

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 358.



authoritie over his ghests, but clean otherwise, sith every man may use his inne as his owne house in England, and have for his monie how great or little varietie of vittels, and what other service himselfe shall thinke expedient to call for. Our innes are also verie well furnished with naperie, bedding, and tapisserie, especially with naperie: for beside the linnen used at the tables, which is commonlie washed dailie, is such and so much as belongeth unto the estate and calling of the ghest. Ech commer is sure to lie in cleane sheets, wherein no man hath béene lodged since they came from the landresse, or out of the water wherein they were last washed. If the traveller have an horsse, his bed dooth cost him nothing, but if he go on foote he is sure to paie a penie for the same: but whether he be horsseman or footman if his chamber be once appointed he may carie the kaie with him, as of his owne house so long as he lodgeth there. If he loose oughts whilst he abideth in the inne, the host is bound by a generall custome to restore the damage, so that there is no greater securitie anie where for travellers than in the gretest ins of England." He then, after enumerating the depredations to which travellers are subject on the road, completes the picture by the following additional touches. "In all innes we have plentie of ale, biere, and sundrie kinds of wine, and such is the capacitie of some of them, that they are able to lodge two hundred or three hundred persons, and their horsses at ease, and thereto with a verie short warning make such provision for their diet, as to him that is unacquainted withall may seeme to be incredible. And it is a world to see how ech owner of them contendeth with other for goodnesse of interteinment of their ghests, as about finesse and change of linnen, furniture of bedding, beautie of rooms, service at the table, costlinesse of plate, strength of drinke, varietie of wines, or well using of horsses. Finallie there is not so much omitted among them as the gorgeoussnes of their verie signes at their doores, wherein some doo consume thirtie or fortie pounds, a meere vanitie in mine opinion, but so vaine will they needs be, and that not onelie to give some outward token

of the inne keeper's welth, but also to procure good ghests to the frequenting of their houses, in hope there to be well used." \*

"As soone as a passenger comes to an inne," remarks Moryson, "the servants run to him, and one takes his horse and walkes him till he be cold, then rubs him down, and gives him meat. Another servant gives the passenger his private chamber, and kindles his fire; the third pulls off his bootes and makes them cleane; then the host or hostess visits him; and if he will eate with the hoste, or at a common table with others, his meale will cost him sixpence, or in some places but four-pence; but if he will eate in his chamber he commands what meate he will according to his appetite; yea the kitchin is open to him to order the meate to be dressed as he likes beste. After having eaten what he pleases, he may, with credit, set by a part for the next day's breakfast. His bill will then be written for him, and, should he object to any charge, the host is ready to alter it." †

Taverns and ale-houses were frequently distinguished in Shakspeare's time by a *bush or tuft of ivy* at their doors; a custom which more particularly prevailed in Warwickshire, and is still practised, remarks Mr. Ritson, in this county "at statute-hirings, wakes, &c. by people who sell ale at no other time." ‡ The poet alludes to this observance in his Epilogue to *As You Like It*: — "If it be true," he says, "that *Good wine needs no bush*, 'tis true, that a good play needs no epilogue: *Yet to good wine they do use good bushes*." § Several old plays mention the same custom, and Bishop Earle, in his *Microcosmography*, tells us that "A Tavern is a degree, or (if you will) a pair of stairs above an ale-house, where men are drunk with more credit and apology. If the vintner's rose be at door, it is a sign sufficient, but the absence of this is supplied by the *ivy-bush*." ||

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, vol. i. p. 414, 415. Edit. of 1807.

† Moryson's Itinerary, part iii. p. 151. folio. London, 1617.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 189. note.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 189, 190.

|| Bliss's edition, 1811. p. 37, 38.



That houses of this description, the whole furniture of which, according to Earle, consisted but of a stool, a table, and a \* *pot de chambre*, were as numerous two hundred years ago as at present, and the scene of the same disgusting and intemperate orgies, is but too apparent from the invective of Robert Burton:—"See the mischief," he exclaims; "many men knowing that merry company is the only medicine against melancholy, will therefore neglect their business, and in another extream, spend all their dayes among good fellows, in a Tavern or an Ale-house, and know not otherwise how to bestow their time but in drinking; malt-worms, men fishes, or water-snakes, *Qui bibunt solum ranarum more, nihil comedentes*, like so many frogs in a puddle. 'Tis their sole exercise to eat, and drink; to sacrifice to *Volupia, Rumina, Edulica, Potina, Mellona*, is all their religion. They wish for *Philoxenus* neck, *Jupiter's trinoctium*, and that the sun would stand still as in *Joshua's* time, to satisfie their lust, that they might *dies noctesque pergræcari et bibere*. Flourishing wits, and men of good parts, good fashion, and good worth, basely prostitute themselves to every rogues company, to take tobacco and drink, to roar and sing scurrile songs in base placès.

"*Invenies aliquem cum percussore jacentem,  
Permistum nautis, aut furibus, aut fugitivis.*"

Juvenal.

"What *Thomas Erastus* objects to *Paracelsus*, that he would lye drinking all day long with carr-men and tapsters in a Brothel-house, is too frequent amongst us, with men of better note: like *Timocreon* of *Rhodes*, *multa bibens, et multa vorans*, &c. They drown their wits and seeth their brains in ale." †

Few ceremonies are better calculated to throw light on the manners and customs of a country, than those attendant on WEDDINGS and BURIALS, and with these, as they occurred in *rural life*, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, we shall close this chapter.

\* Earle's *Microcosmography*, p. 38.

† Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 8th edit. p. 191.



The style of courtship which prevailed in Shakspeare's time, may be drawn, with considerable accuracy, from the numerous love-dialogues interspersed throughout his plays. From these specimens not much disparity, either in language or manner, appears to have existed between the addresses of the courtier and the country-gentleman ; the female character was indeed, at this period, greatly less important than at present ; the blandishments of gallantry, and the elegancies of compliment were little known, and consequently the expression of the tender passion admitted of neither much variety nor much polish. The amatory dialogues of Hamlet, Hotspur, and Henry the Fifth, are not more refined than those which occur between Master Fenton and Anne Page, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* ; between Lorenzo and Jessica in the *Merchant of Venice*, and between Orlando and Rosalind, in *As You Like It*. These last, which may be considered as instances taken from the middle class of life, together with a few drawn from the lower rank of rural manners, such as the courtship of Touchstone and Audrey, and of Silvius and Phoebe, in *As You Like It*, will sufficiently apply to the illustration of our present subject ; but it must be remarked that, in point of fancy, sentiment, and simplicity, the most pleasing love-scenes in Shakspeare are those that take place between Romeo and Juliet, and between Florizel and Perdita ; the latter especially present a most lovely and engaging picture, on the female side, of pastoral naïveté and sweetness ; and will, in part, serve to show, how far, in the opinion of Shakspeare, refinement was, at that time, compatible, as a just representation of nature, with cottage-life.

*Betrothing* or *plighting of troth*, as an *affiance* or *promise of future marriage*, was still, there is reason to suppose, often observed in Shakspeare's time, especially in the country, and as a *private* rite. The interchange of rings was the ceremony used on this occasion, to which the poet refers in his *Two Gentlemen of Verona* :

“ *Julia.* Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake. (Giving a ring.)  
*Pro.* Why then we'll make exchange ; here take you this.  
*Jul.* And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.” \*

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 213, Act ii. sc. 2.



The *public* celebration of this contract, or what was termed *espousals* \*, was formerly in this country, as well as upon the continent, a constant preliminary to marriage. It usually took place in the church, and though nearly, if not altogether, disused, towards the close of the fifteenth century, is minutely described by Shakspeare in his *Twelfth Night*. Olivia, addressing Sebastian, says, —

“ Now go with me, and with this holy man,  
 Into the chantry by: there *before him*  
 And underneath that *consecrated roof*  
*Plight me the full assurance of your faith* ;  
 That my most jealous and too doubtful soul  
 May live at peace. He shall conceal it  
 Whiles you are willing it shall come to note ;  
 What time we will our *celebration* keep  
 According to my birth.” †

A description of what passed at this ceremony of espousals or betrothing, is given by the priest himself in the first scene of the subsequent act, who calls it

“ A contract of eternal bond of love  
 Confirm'd by *mutual joinder of your hands*,  
 Attested by the *holy close of lips*,  
 Strengthened by *interchangement of your rings* ;  
 And all the ceremony of this compact  
 Seal'd in my function, by *my testimony*.” ‡

These four observances, therefore ; 1st, *the joining of hands* ; 2dly, *the mutually given kiss* ; 3dly, *the interchangement of rings* ; and 4thly, *the testimony of witnesses* : appear to have been essential parts of the public ceremony of betrothing or espousals, which usually preceded

\* “ Vincent de Beauvais, a writer of the 13th century, in his *Speculum historiale*, lib. ix. c. 70., has defined *espousals* to be a contract of future marriage, made either by a simple promise, by earnest or security given, by a ring, or by an oath.” Douce's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 109.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 395. Act iv. sc. 3.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 403. Act v. sc. 1.

the marriage rite by the term of forty days. The oath indeed, administered on this occasion, was to the following effect:—" You swear by God and his holy saints herein and by all the saints of Paradise, that you will take this woman whose name is N. to wife within forty days, if holy church will permit." The priest then joining their hands, said—" And thus you affiance yourselves;" to which the parties answered,—“ Yes, sir.”\* So frequently has Shakspeare referred to this custom of troth-plighting, that, either privately or publickly, we must conclude it to have been of common usage in his days: thus, in *Measure for Measure*, Mariana says to Angelo,

“ This is the *hand*, which with a *vow'd contract*,  
Was fast belock'd in thine:” †

and then addressing the duke, she exclaims,

“ As there is sense in truth, and truth in virtue,  
I am *affianc'd* this man's wife.” ‡

So in *King John*, King Philip, and the Arch-duke of Austria, encouraging the connection of the Dauphin and Blanch:

“ *K. Phil.* It likes us well;—Young princes, *close your hands*.  
*Aust.* And your *lips* too; for, I am well *assur'd*,  
That I did so, when I was first *assur'd*.” §

One immoral consequence arising from this custom of public betrothing was, that the parties, depending upon the priest as a witness, frequently cohabited as man and wife. It would appear, indeed, from a passage in Shakspeare, that the ceremony of troth-plight, at

\* Douce's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 113.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 395.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 396.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 405. Here *assur'd* is taken in the sense of *affianced* or *contracted*. If necessary, many more instances of betrothing, and troth-plighting, might be brought forward from our author's dramas.



least among the lower orders, was considered as a sufficient warrant for intercourse of this kind ; for he makes the jealous Leontes, in his *Winter's Tale*, exclaim,

“ My wife's a hobby horse ; deserves a name  
As rank as any flax-wench, that *puts to*  
*Before her troth-plight.*” \*

We must not forget, however, to remark, while on the subject of betrothing, that a singular proof of delicacy and attention to the fair sex, on this occasion, during the sixteenth century, has been quoted by Mr. Strutt, from a manuscript in the Harleian library, and which runs thus : “ By the civil law, whatever is given *ex sponsalitia largitate, betwixt them that are promised in marriage*, hath a condition, for the most part silent, that it may be had again if marriage ensue not ; but if the man should have had a kiss for his money, he should lose one half of what he gave. Yet with the woman it is otherwise ; for kissing or not kissing, whatever she gave, she may have it again.” †

Concerning the customs attendant on the celebration of the *marriage rite*, among the middle and inferior ranks, in the country, during the period which we are endeavouring to illustrate, much information, of the description we want, may be found in Shakspeare and his contemporaries.

The procession accompanying a rural bride, of some consequence, or of the middle rank, to church, has been thus given us : — “ The bride being attired in a gown of sheep's russet, and a kirtle of fine worsted, her hair attired with a 'billement of gold, and her hair as yellow as gold hanging down behind her, which was curiously combed and plaited, she was led to church between two sweet boys, with bride laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves. There was a fair bride-cup of silver, gilt, carried before her, wherein was a goodly branch of rosemary, gilded very fair, hung about with silken ribbands

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 240.

† Strutt's Manners and Customs, vol. iii. p. 155.

of all colours. Musicians came next, then a groupe of maidens, some bearing great bride-cakes, others garlands of wheat finely gilded; and thus they passed on to the church." \*

Rosemary being supposed to strengthen the memory, was considered as an emblem of fidelity, and, at this period, was almost as constantly used at weddings as at funerals: "There's rosemary," says Ophelia, "that's for remembrance." † Many passages, illustrative of this usage at weddings, might be taken from our old plays, during the reign of James I., but two or three will suffice.

—— " will I be wed this morning,  
Thou shalt not be there, nor once be graced with  
A piece of rosemary." ‡

" Were the *rosemary* branches dipp'd, and all  
The hippocras and cakes eat and drunk off;  
Were these two arms encompass'd with the hands  
Of bachelors to lead me to the church." §

" *Phis.* Your master is to be married to-day?  
*Trim.* Else all this *rosemary* is lost." ||

Of the peculiarities attending the marriage-ceremony within the church, a pretty good idea may be formed from the ludicrous wedding

\* History of Jack of Newbury, 4to. chap. ii.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 294.

‡ Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks, by Barry, 1611. Vide Ancient British Drama, vol. ii.

§ Beaumont and Fletcher's Scornful Lady, 1616.

|| A Faire Quarrel, by Middleton and Rowley, 1617. Besides rosemary, flowers of various kinds were frequently strewn before the bride as she passed to church; a custom alluded to in a well-known line of Shakspeare,

" Our *Bridal Flowers* serve for a buried corse:"

and more explicitly depicted in the following passage from one of his contemporaries: —

" *Adriana.* Come straw apace, Lord shall I never live  
To walke to Church on flowers? O 'tis fine,  
To see a Bride trip it to Church so lightly,  
As if her new Choppines would scorne to bruise  
A silly flower!"

Barry's Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks, act v. sc. 1. 4to. 1611.



of Catharine and Petruchio in the *Taming of the Shrew*. It appears from this description, that it was usual to drink wine at the altar immediately after the service was closed, a custom which was followed by the Bridegroom's saluting the bride.

" He calls for wine: — A health, quoth he; as if  
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates  
After a storm: — Quaff'd off the muscadel,  
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face; —  
This done, he took the bride about the neck;  
And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack,  
That, at the parting, all the church did echo." \*

In the account of the procession just quoted, we find that a bride-cup was carried before the bride; out of this all the persons present, together with the new-married couple, were expected to drink in the church. This custom was prevalent, in Shakspeare's time, among every description of people, from the regal head to the thorough-paced rustic; accordingly we are informed, on the testimony of an assisting witness, that the same ceremony took place at the marriage of the Elector Palatine to King James's daughter, on the 14th day of February, 1612-13: there was "in conclusion," he relates, "a joy pronounced by the king and queen, and seconded with congratulation of the lords there present, which crowned with draughts of *Ippocras* out of a *great golden bowle*, as an health to the prosperity of the marriage, (began by the prince Palatine and answered by the princess.) After which were served up by six or seven barons so many bowles filled with wafers, so much of that work was consummate." †

This *bride-cup* or *bowle* was, therefore, frequently termed the *knitting*

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 114, 115, 116. Act iii. sc. 2.

† Finet's Philoxenis, 1656, p. 11. quoted by Mr. Reed in his Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 115. note.

or *contracting cup*: thus in Ben Jonson's *Magnetick Lady*, *Compass* says to *Practise*, after enquiring for a licence,

———“ Mind  
The Parson's pint t'engage him —  
A *knitting-cup* there must be ;” \*

and Middleton, in one of his Comedies, gives us the following line :—

“ Even when my lip touch'd the *contracting cup*.” †

The salutation of the Bride at the altar was a very ancient custom, and is referred to by several of the contemporaries of Shakspeare; Marston, for instance, represents one of his female characters saying,

“ The *kisse* thou gav'st me in the church, here take.” ‡

It was still customary at this period, to bless the bridal bed at night, in order to dissipate the supposed illusions of the Devil; a superstitious rite of which Mr. Douce has favoured us with the form, taken from the Manual for the use of Salisbury in the 13th § century. It is noticed by Chaucer also in his *Marchantes Tale*, and is mentioned as one of the marriage-ceremonies in the “ Articles ordained by King Henry VII. for the regulation of his Household.” || Shakspeare alludes to this ridiculous fashion in the person of Oberon, who tells his fairies,

“ To the best *bride-bed* will we,  
Which by us shall blessed be.” ¶

\* Folio edit. p. 44. Act iv. sc. 2.

† *No Wit, no Help like a Womans*, 8vo. 1657. Middleton was contemporary with Shakspeare, and commenced a dramatic writer in 1602.

‡ *Insatiate Countess*, 4to. 1603.

§ Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. i. p. 199.

|| Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 459. note, by Steevens.

¶ *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act v. sc. 2. Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 459.



To this brief description of marriage-ceremonies, it will be necessary to subjoin some account of those which accompanied the *mere rustic* wedding, or *Bride-ale*; and fortunately we have a most curious picture of the kind preserved by Laneham, in his *Letter on the Queen's Entertainment at Kenelworth Castle*, in 1575, one part of which was the representation of a *country Bride-ale* set in order in the Tylt-yard, and exhibited in the great court of the castle. This grotesque piece of pageantry, a faithful draught of rural costume, as it then existed, must have afforded Her Majesty no small degree of amusement.

“ Thus were they marshalled. First, all the lustie lads and bold bachelors of the parish, suitably every wight with his blue buckram bridelace upon a branch of green broom (cause rosemary is scant there) tied on his left arm (for a that side lies the heart), and his alder poll for a spear in his right hand, in martial order ranged on afore, two and two in a rank: Some with a hat, some in a cap, some a coat, some a jerkin, some for lightness in his doublet and his hose, clean trust with a point afore: Some boots and no spurs, he spurs and no boots, and he neither one nor t’other: One a saddle, another a pad or a pannel fastened with a cord, for girts wear geazon: And these to the number of a sixteen wight riding men and well beseem: But the bridegroom foremost, in his father’s tawny worsted jacket (for his friends were fain that he should be a bridegroom before the *Queen*), a fair straw hat with a capital crown, steeple-wise on his head: a pair of harvest gloves on his hands, as a sign of good husbandry: A pen and inkhorn at his back; for he would be known to be bookish: lame of a leg, that in his youth was broken at football: Well beloved yet of his mother, that lent him a new mufflar for a napkin that was tied to his girdle for losing. It was no small sport to mark this minion in his full appointment, that through good schoolation became as formal in his action, as had he been a bridegroom indeed; with this special grace by the way, that ever as he would have framed him the better countenance, with the worse face he looked.

“ Well, Sir, after these horsemen, a lively morrice-dance, according to the ancient manner ; six dancers, maid-marian, and the fool. Then three pretty puzels, (maids or damsels from *pucelle*) as bright as a breast of bacon, of a thirty year old a piece, that carried three special spice-cakes of a bushel of wheat (they had it by measure out of my *Lords* backhouse), before the bride : Cicely with set countenance, and lips so demurely simpering, as it had been a mare cropping of a thistle. After these, a lovely lubber woorts\*, freckle-faced, red-headed, clean trussed in his doublet and his hose taken up now indeed by commission, for that he was so loth to come forward, for reverence belike of his new cut canvass doublet ; and would by his good will have been but a gazer, but found to be a meet actor for his office : That was to bear the bride-cup, formed of a sweet sucket barrel, a faire-turned foot set to it, all seemly besilvered and parcel gilt, adorned with a beautiful branch of broom, gayly begilded for rosemary ; from which, two broad bride laces of red and yellow buckeram begilded, and gallantly streaming by such wind as there was, for he carried it aloft : This gentle cup-bearer, yet had his freckled physiognomy somewhat unhappily infested as he went, by the busy flies, that flocked about the bride-cup for the sweetness of the sucket that it savoured on ; but he, like a tall fellow, withstood their malice stoutly (see what manhood may do), beat them away, killed them by scores, stood to his charge, and marched on in good order.

“ Then followed the worshipful bride, led (after the country manner) between two ancient parishioners, honest townsmen. But a stale stallion, and a well spred, (hot as the weather was) God wot, and ill smelling was she ; a thirty-five year old, of colour brown-bay not very beautiful indeed, but ugly, foul ill favoured ; yet marvellous vain of the office, because she heard say she should dance before the *Queen*, in which feat she thought she would foot it as finely as the

\* *Woorts* ; of this word I know not the precise meaning ; but suppose it is meant to imply *plodded* or *stumbled on*.



best: Well, after this bride, came there by two and two, a dozen damsels for bride-maids; that for favor, attyre, for fashion and cleanliness, were as meet for such a bride as a treen ladle for a porridge-pot; more (but for fear of carrying all clean) had been appointed, but these few were enow." \*

From a passage in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, we learn that the dress of the downright rustic, on his wedding day, was as follows:

"He had on a lether doublet, with long points,  
And a paire of pin'd-up breech's, like pudding bags:  
With yellow stockings, and his hat turn'd up  
With a silver claspe, on his leere side." †

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\* Nichols's *Queen Elizabeth's Progresses*, vol. i. — Laneham's Letter, p. 18, 19, 20.

† Jonson's Works, fol. edit. of 1640, vol. ii. *A Tale of a Tub*, p. 72. — Much of the spirit and costume of the *rural wedding* of the sixteenth century continued to survive until within these eighty years. "I have received," says Mr. Brand, who wrote in 1776, "from those who have been present at them, the following account of the customs used at *vulgar Northern Weddings*, about *half a century ago*: —

"The young women in the neighbourhood, with bride-favours (knots of ribbands) at their breasts, and nosegays in their hands, attended the Bride on her wedding-day in the morning. — *Fore-Riders* announced with shouts the arrival of the Bridegroom; after a kind of breakfast, at which the *bride-cakes* were set on and the *barrels broached*, they walked out towards the church. — The Bride was led by *two young men*; the Bridegroom by *two young women*: Pipers preceded them, while the crowd tossed up their hats, shouted and clapped their hands. An indecent custom prevailed after the ceremony, and that too before the altar: — Young men strove who could first *unloose*, or rather pluck off the Bride's garters: Ribbands supplied their place on this occasion; whosoever was so fortunate as to tear them thus off from her legs, bore them about the church in triumph.

"It is still usual for the young men present to *salute* the *Bride* immediately after the performing of the marriage service.

"Four, with their horses, were waiting without; they *saluted* the Bride at the church gate, and immediately mounting, contended who should first carry home the good news, and win what they call the *KAIL*;" i. e. a *smoking prize of spice-broth*, which stood ready prepared to reward the victor in this singular kind of race.

"Dinner succeeded; to that dancing and supper; after which a *posset* was made, of which the Bride and Bridegroom were always to taste first. — The men departed the room till the Bride was undressed by her *maids*, and put to bed; the Bridegroom in his turn was undressed by his men, and the ceremony concluded with the well-known rite of *throwing the stocking*." — Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulg.* apud Brand, p. 371, 372, 373. edit. 1810.

Of the ceremonies attendant on *Christenings*, it will be necessary to mention two that prevailed at this period, and which have since fallen into disuse. Shakspeare, who generally transfers the customs of his own times to those periods of which he is treating, represents Henry VIII. saying to Cranmer, whom he had appointed Godfather to Elizabeth,

“ Come, come, my lord, you’d spare your *spoons* ;” \*

and again in the dialogue between the porter and his man:

“ *Port.* On my christian conscience, this one christening will beget a thousand; here will be father, godfather, and all together.

“ *Man.* The *spoons* will be the bigger, sir.” †

In the days of Elizabeth and her predecessor, Mary, it was usual for the sponsors at christenings to present the child with silver spoons gilt, on the handles of which were engraved the figures of the apostles, whence they were commonly called *apostle-spoons*: thus Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair*; “and all this for the hope of two *apostle-spoons*, to suffer.” ‡ The opulent frequently gave a complete set of spoons, namely, the twelve apostles; those less rich, selected the four evangelists, and the poorer class were content to offer a single spoon, or, at most, two, on which were carved their favourite saint or saints.

Among the higher ranks, in the reign of Henry VIII. the practice at christenings was to give *cups* or *bowls* of gold or silver. Accordingly Holinshed, describing the christening of Elizabeth, relates that “the archbishop of Canturburie gave to the princesse a standing cup of gold: the dutches of Norfolke gave to her a standing cup of gold, fretted with pearle: the marchionesse of Dorset gave three gilt bolles, pounced with a cover: and the marchionesse of Excester gave three standing bolles graven, all gilt with a cover.” §

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 197.

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 203.

‡ Ben Jonson’s Works, fol. edit. 1640. vol. ii. p. 6.

§ Holinshed’s Chronicles, vol. iii. p. 787. edit. 1808.



In the Harleian MS. Vol. 6395, occurs a scarce pamphlet, entitled *Merry Passages and Jeasts*, from which Dr. Birch transcribed the following curious anecdote, as illustrative both of the custom of offering spoons, and of the intimacy which subsisted between Shakspeare and Jonson. "Shakspeare," says the author of this collection, who names *Donne* as his authority for the story, "was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the christening, being in deepe study, Jonson came to cheer him up, and ask'd him why he was so melancholy: No 'faith Ben, says he, not I; but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last. I pr'ythee what? says he.—I'faith, Ben, I'll give him a douzen good *latten* (Latin) *spoons*, and thou shalt translate them."\* It was not until the close of the seventeenth century, that this practice of spoon-giving at christenings ceased as a general custom.

Another baptismal ceremony, now laid aside, was the use of the chrisome, or white cloth, which was put on the child after the performance of the sacred rite. To this usage Dame Quickly alludes in describing the death of Falstaff, though, in accordance with her character, she corrupts the term: "'A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any *chrism* child."†

Previous to the Reformation, oil was used, as well as water, in baptism, or rather a kind of mixture of oil and balsam, which in the Greek was called *Χρισμα*; hence the white cloth worn on this occasion, as an emblem of purity, was denominated the *chrismale* or *chrism-cloth*. During the era of using this holy unction, with which the priest made the sign of the cross, on the breast, shoulders, and head of the child, the *chrismale* was worn only for seven days, as symbolical, it is said, of the seven ages of life; but after the Reformation, the oil being omitted, it was kept on the child until the purifi-

\* Capell's Notes and Various Readings on Shakspeare, vol. i.; and Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 198. — L'Estrange, a nephew to Sir Roger L'Estrange, appears to have been the compiler of these anecdotes. Of the truth of the story, however, as far as it relates to Shakspeare and Jonson, there is reason to entertain much doubt.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 343. Act ii. sc. 3.

cation of the mother, when, after the ceremony of churching, it was returned to the minister, by whom it had been originally supplied. If the child died during the month of wearing the chrisome-cloth, it was buried in it, and children thus situated were called in the bills of mortality *chrisoms*. This practice, which was common in the days of Shakspeare, continued in use for nearly a century afterwards; for Blount in his *Glossography*, 1678, explains the word *chrisoms* as meaning such children as die within the month of birth, because during that time they use to wear the chrisom-cloth.\*

We shall now proceed to consider some of the peculiarities accompanying the *Funeral Rites* of this period; and, in the first place, we shall notice the *passing-bell*. This was rung at an early era of the church, to solicit the prayers of all good christians for the welfare of the soul *passing* into another world: thus Durandus, who wrote towards the close of the twelfth century, says: "*Verum aliquo moriente, campanæ debent pulsari, ut populus hoc audiens, oret pro illo:*" "when any one is *dying*, the bells must be tolled, *that the people may put up their prayers for him.*"† This custom of ringing a bell for a soul just departing, which is *now* relinquished, the bell only tolling after death, we have reason to believe was still observed in Shakspeare's time; for he makes Northumberland in *King Henry IV.* remark on the "bringer of unwelcome news," that

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" his tongue  
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,  
Remember'd knolling a *departing* friend." ‡

Another benefit formerly supposed to be derived from the sounding of the passing-bell, and which, from the scene of Cardinal Beaufort's death, was probably a part of Shakspeare's creed, consisted in the discomfiture of the evil spirits, who were supposed to surround the bed of the dying person; and who, terrified by the tolling of the

\* Vide Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. i. p. 488.; and Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xii. p. 345.

† Vide *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*: the first edition was printed in 1459.

‡ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xii. p. 16.



holy bell, were compelled to keep aloof; accordingly Durandus mentions it as one of the effects of bell-ringing, *ut dæmones timentes* \* *fugiant*; and in the Golden Legende, printed by Wynkyn de Worde 1498, it is observed that “the evill spirytes that ben in the regyon of the ayre, doubte moche when they here the bells rongen: and this is the cause why the belles ben rongen—to the ende that the feindes and wycked spirytes shold be abashed and flee.” †

That these opinions, indeed, relative to the *passing-bell*, continued to prevail, as things of general belief, during the greater part of the seventeenth century, is evident from the works of the pious Bishop Taylor, in which are to be found several forms of prayer for the souls of the *departing*, to be offered up *during the tolling of the passing-bell*. In these the violence of Hell is deprecated, and it is petitioned, that the spirits of darkness may be driven far from the couch of the dying sinner. ‡

So common, indeed, was this practice, that almost every individual had an exclamation or form of prayer ready to be recited on hearing the passing-bell, whence the following proverbial rhyme:

“When the Bell begins to toll  
Cry, *Lord have mercy on the soul.*”

In the *Vittoria Corombona* of Webster, this custom is alluded to in a manner singularly wild and striking. Cornelia says:

“*Cor.* I’ll give you a saying which my grand-mother  
Was wont, when she *heard the bell*, to sing o’er unto her lute.  
*Ham.* Do an you will, do.  
*Cor.* Call for the robin-red-breast, and the wren,  
Since o’er shady groves they hover,  
And with leaves and flowers do cover  
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

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\* Durandi Rational. lib. i. c. 4.

† For an account of three editions of De Worde’s Golden Legende, see Dibdin’s *Typographical Antiquit.* vol. ii. p. 73.

‡ These forms of prayer are transcribed by Bourne in his *Antiquitates Vulgares*. — Vide Brand’s edit. p. 10. Bishop Taylor died in 1667.

Call unto his funeral dole  
 The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,  
 To raise him hillocks that shall keep him warm,  
 And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm,  
 But keep the wolf far thence: that's foe to men,  
 For with his nails he'll dig them up again."

*Ancient British Drama*, vol. iii. p. 41.

Even so late as the commencement of the eighteenth century, it appears that this custom of praying during the passing-bell still lingered in some parts of the country; for Mr. Bourne, the first edition of whose book was published in 1725, after vindicating the practice, adds,—“I know several religious families in this place (Newcastle), and I hope it is so in other places too, who always observe it, whenever the melancholy season offers; and therefore it will at least sometimes happen, when we put up our prayers constantly at the tolling of the bell, that we shall pray for a soul departing. And though it be granted, that it will oftener happen otherwise, as the regular custom is so little followed; yet that can be no harmful praying for the dead.” \*

Immediately after death a ceremony commenced, the most offensive part of which has not been laid aside for more than half a century. This was called the *Licke* or *Lake-wake*, a term derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Lic* a corpse, and *Wæcce* a *wake* or *watching*. It originally consisted of a meeting of the friends and relations of the deceased, for the purpose of watching by the body from the moment it ceased to breathe, to its exportation to the grave; a duty which was at first performed with solemnity and piety, accompanied by the singing of psalms and the recitation of the virtues of the dead. It speedily, however, degenerated into a scene of levity, of feasting, and intoxication; to such a degree, indeed, that it was thought necessary at a provincial synod held in London during the reign of Edward III. to issue a canon for the restriction of the watchers to the near relations and most intimate friends of the deceased, and only to such of these as offered to repeat a fixed number of psalms

\* Bourne apud Brand, p. 9.



for the benefit of his soul.\* To this regulation little attention, we apprehend, was paid; for the Lake-wake appears to have been observed as a meeting of revelry during the whole of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and Mr. Bourne, so late as the year 1725, declares, that it was *then* “a scene of sport and drinking and lewdness.” †

In Scotland during the period of which we are treating, and even down to the rebellion of 1745, the Lake-wake was observed with still greater form and effect than in England, though not often with a better moral result. Mr. Pennant describing it, when speaking of the Highland customs, under the mistaken etymology of *Late-wake*, says, that the evening after the death of any person, the relations or friends of the deceased met at the house, attended by a bag-pipe or fiddle; the nearest of kin, be it wife, son, or daughter, opened a melancholy ball, dancing and *greeting*, i. e. crying violently at the same time; and this continued till day-light, but with such gambols and frolics among the younger part of the company, that the loss which occasioned them was often more than supplied by the consequences of that night. ‡ Mrs. Grant, however, in her lately published work on the Superstitions of the Highlanders, has given us a more favourable account of this ancient custom, which she has connected with a wild traditionary tale of much moral interest.

A peasant of Glen Banchar, a dreary and secluded recess in the central Highlands, “was fortunate in all respects but one. He had three very fine children, who all, in succession, died after having been weaned, though, before, they gave every promise of health and firmness. Both parents were much afflicted; but the father’s grief was clamorous and unmanly. They resolved that the next should be suckled for two years, hoping, by this, to avoid the repetition of such a misfortune. They did so; and the child, by living longer, only took

\* Collier’s Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 546.

† Antiquitates Vulgares apud Brand, p. 23.

‡ Tour in Scotland.

a firmer hold of their affections, and furnished more materials for sorrowful recollection. At the close of the second year, he followed his brothers; and there were no bounds to the affliction of the parents.

“ There are, however, in the economy of Highland life, certain duties and courtesies which are indispensable; and for the omission of which nothing can apologise. One of those is, to call in all their friends, and feast them at the time of the greatest family distress. The death of the child happened late in spring, when sheep were abroad in the more inhabited *straths*; but, from the blasts in that high and stormy region, were still confined to the cot. In a dismal snowy evening, the man, unable to stifle his anguish, went out, lamenting aloud, for a lamb to treat his friends with at the *Late-wake*. At the door of the cot, however, he found a stranger standing before the entrance. He was astonished, in such a night, to meet a person so far from any frequented place. The stranger was plainly attired; but had a countenance expressive of singular mildness and benevolence, and, addressing him in a sweet, impressive voice, asked him what he did there amidst the tempest. He was filled with awe, which he could not account for, and said, that he came for a lamb. ‘What kind of lamb do you mean to take?’ said the stranger. ‘The very best I can find,’ he replied, ‘as it is to entertain my friends; and I hope you will share of it.’—‘Do your sheep make any resistance when you take away the lamb, or any disturbance afterwards?’—‘Never,’ was the answer. ‘How differently am I treated!’ said the traveller. ‘When I come to visit my sheepfold, I take, as I am well entitled to do, the best lamb to myself; and my ears are filled with the clamour of discontent by these ungrateful sheep, whom I have fed, watched, and protected.’

“ He looked up in amaze; but the vision was fled. He went however for the lamb, and brought it home with alacrity. He did more: It was the custom of these times—a custom, indeed, which was not extinct till after 1745—for people to dance at *Late-wakes*. It was a mournful kind of movement, but still it was dancing. The nearest relation of the deceased often began the ceremony weeping; but did,



however, begin it, to give the example of fortitude and resignation. This man, on other occasions, had been quite unequal to the performance of this duty; but at this time he, immediately on coming in, ordered music to begin, and danced the solitary measure appropriate to such occasions. The reader must have very little sagacity or knowledge of the purport and consequences of visions, who requires to be told, that many sons were born, lived, and prospered afterwards in this reformed family." \*

Some vestiges of the *Lake-wake* still remain at this day in remote parts of the north of England, especially at the period of *laying out*, or *streeking* the corpse, as it is termed; and here it may be remarked, that in the time of Shakspeare, the practice of *winding the corse*, or putting on the *winding-sheet*, was a ceremony of a very impressive kind, and accompanied by the solemn melody of dirges. Some lines strikingly illustrative of this pious duty, are to be found in the *White Devil*; or *Vittoria Corombona* of Webster, published in 1612. Francisco, Duke of Florence, tells Flaminio,

" I found them *winding* of Marcello's corse;  
And there is such a solemn melody,  
'Tween doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies;  
Such as old grandames, watching by the dead,  
Were wont to outwear the nights with; that, believe me,  
I had no eyes to guide me forth the room,  
They were so o'ercharged with water. —

*Cornelia, the Moor, and three other ladies, discovered WINDING Marcello's corse. A SONG.*

*Cor.* This rosemary is wither'd, pray get fresh;  
I would have these herbs grow up in his grave,  
When I am dead and rotten. Reach the bays,  
I'll tie a garland here about his head:  
'Twill keep my boy from lightning. This *sheet*  
I have kept this twenty years, and every day  
Hallow'd it with my prayers; I did not think  
He should have worn it." †

\* Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland, vol. i. p. 184—188.

† Ancient British Drama, vol. iii. p. 40.

Another exquisite passage of this fine old poet alludes to the same practice — a villain of ducal rank, expiring from the effect of poison, exclaims,

“ O thou soft natural death ! that art joint-twin  
To sweetest slumber ! — no rough-bearded comet  
Stares on thy mild departure ; the dull owl  
Beats not against thy casement ; the hoarse wolf  
Scents not thy carion. *Pity winds thy corse,*  
Whilst horror waits on princes.” \*

After the funeral was over, it was customary, among all ranks, to give a cold, and sometimes a very ostentatious, entertainment to the mourners. To this usage Shakspeare refers, in the character of Hamlet :

“ Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the *funeral bak'd meats*  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables,”

a passage which Mr. Collins has illustrated by the following quotation from a contemporary writer : “ His corpes was with funerall pompe conveyed to the church, and there sollemnly enterred, nothing omitted which necessitie or custom could claime ; a sermon, a *banquet*, and like observations.” †

The funeral feast is not yet extinct ; it may occasionally be met with in places remote from the metropolis, and more particularly in the northern counties among some of the wealthy yeomanry. Mr. Douce considers the practice as “ certainly borrowed from the *cæna feralis* of the Romans,” and adds, “ in the North this feast is called an *arval* or *arvil supper* ; and the loaves that are sometimes distributed among the poor, *arval-bread*. Not many years since one of these arvals was celebrated in a village in Yorkshire at a public-house, the sign of which was the family arms of a nobleman whose motto is VIRTUS POST FUNERA VIVIT. The undertaker, who, though a clerk, was no scholar, requested a gentleman present to explain to

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. iii. p. 36.

† The Tragique Historie of the Faire Valeria of London, 1598. Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 43. note.



him the meaning of these Latin words, which he readily and facetiously did in the following manner; *Virtus*, a parish clerk, *vivit*, lives well, *post funera*, at an *arval*. The latter word is apparently derived from some lost Teutonic term that indicated a funeral pile on which the body was burned in times of Paganism." \*

A few observations must still be added on the pleasing, though now nearly obsolete, practice of carrying ever-greens and garlands at funerals, and of decorating the grave with flowers. There is something so strikingly emblematic, so delightfully soothing in these old rites, that though the prototype be probably heathen, their disuse is to be regretted. "The carrying of ivy, or laurel, or rosemary, or some of those ever-greens," says Bourne, "is an emblem of the soul's immortality. It is as much as to say, that though the body be dead, yet the soul is ever-green and always in life: it is not like the body, and those other greens which die and revive again at their proper seasons, no autumn nor winter can make a change in it, but it is unalterably the same, perpetually in life, and never dying.

"The Romans, and other heathens upon this occasion, made use of cypress, which being once cut, will never flourish nor grow any more, as an emblem of their dying for ever, and being no more in life. But instead of that, the antient Christians used the things before mentioned; they laid them under the corps in the grave, to signify, that they who die in Christ, do not cease to live. For though, as to the body they die to the world, yet as to their souls, they live to God.

"And as the carrying of these ever-greens is an emblem of the soul's immortality, so it is also of the resurrection of the body: for as these herbs are not entirely plucked up, but only cut down, and will, at the returning season, revive and spring up again; so the body, like them, is but cut down for a while, and will rise and shoot up again at the resurrection." †

The *bay* and *rosemary* were the plants usually chosen, the former

\* Douce's Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 202, 203.

† Bourne's Antiquitates Vulg. p. 33, 34.

as being said to revive from the root, when apparently dead, and the latter from its supposed virtue in strengthening the memory :

“ There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance.” \*

Shakspeare has frequently noticed these ever-greens, garlands, and flowers, as forming a part of the tributary rites of the departed, as elegant memorials of the dead : at the funeral of Juliet he adopts the rosemary : —

“ Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary  
On this fair corse ; and as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church.” †

*Garlands* of flowers were formerly either hung up in country-churches, as a mark of honour and esteem, over the seats of those who had died virgins, or were remarkable for chastity and fidelity, or were placed in the form of crowns on the coffins of the deceased, and buried with them, for the same purpose. Of these crowns and garlands, which were in frequent use until the commencement of the last century, a very curious account has been given by a writer in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.

“ In this nation (as well as others),” he observes, “ by the abundant zeal of our ancestors, virginity was held in great estimation ; inso-much that those which died in that state were rewarded, at their deaths, with a garland or crown on their heads, denoting their triumphant victory over the lusts of the flesh. Nay, this honour was extended even to a widow that had enjoyed but one husband (saith Weever in his *Fun. Mon.* p. 12.) And, in the year 1733, the present clerk of the parish church of Bromley in Kent, by his digging a grave in that church-yard, close to the east end of the chancel wall, dug up one of these crowns, or garlands, which is most artificially wrought in fillagree work with gold and silver wire, in resem-

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 294.

† Ibid. vol. xx. p. 217, 218.



blance of myrtle (with which plant the funebrial garlands of the ancients were composed) whose leaves are fastened to hoops of large wire of iron, now something corroded with rust, but both the gold and silver remains to this time very little different from its original splendor. It was also lined with cloth of silver, a piece of which, together with part of this curious garland, I keep as a choice relic of antiquity.

“ Besides these crowns, the ancients had also their depository garlands, the use of which were continued even till of late years, (and perhaps are still retained in many parts of this nation, for my own knowledge of these matters extends not above twenty or thirty miles round London,) which garlands at the funerals of the deceased, were carried solemnly before the corpse by two maids, and afterward hung up in some conspicuous place within the church, in memorial of the departed person, and were (at least all that I have seen) made after the following manner, viz. the lower rim or circlet, was a broad hoop of wood, whereunto was fixed, at the sides thereof, part of two other hoops crossing each other at the top, at right angles, which formed the upper part, being about one third longer than the width; these hoops were wholly covered with artificial flowers of paper, dyed horn, or silk, and more or less beauteous, according to the skill and ingenuity of the performer. In the vacancy of the inside, from the top, hung white paper, cut in form of gloves, whereon was wrote the deceased's name, age, &c. together with long slips of various coloured paper, or ribbons. These were many times intermixed with gilded or painted empty shells of blown eggs, as farther ornaments; or, it may be, as emblems of the bubbles or bitterness of this life; whilst other garlands had only a solitary hour-glass hanging therein, as a more significant symbol of mortality.

“ About forty years ago, these garlands grew much out of repute, and were thought, by many, as very unbecoming decorations for so sacred a place as the church; and at the reparation, or new beautifying several churches, where I have been concerned, I was obliged, by order of the minister and churchwardens, to take the garlands down,

and the inhabitants were strictly forbidden to hang up any more for the future. Yet, notwithstanding, several people, unwilling to forsake their ancient and delightful custom, continued still the making of them, and they were carried at the funerals, as before, to the grave, and put therein, upon the coffin, over the face of the dead; this I have seen done in many places." Bromley in Kent. *Gentleman's Magazine for June 1747.*

Shakspeare has alluded to these maiden rites in *Hamlet*, where the priest, at the interment of Ophelia, says,

— "Here she is allow'd her virgin *crants*,  
Her maiden *strewments*, and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial." \*

The term *crants*, observes Johnson, on the authority of a correspondent, is the German word for *garlands*, and was probably retained by us from the Saxons. †

The *strewments* mentioned in this passage refer to a pleasing custom, which is still, we believe, preserved in Wales, of scattering flowers over the graves of the deceased. ‡ It is manifestly copied from the funeral rites of the Greeks and Romans, and was early introduced into the Christian church; for St. Jerom, in an epistle to his friend Pammachius on the death of his wife, remarks, "whilst other husbands strawed violets and roses, and lilies, and purple flowers, upon the graves of their wives, and comforted themselves with such like offices, Pammachius bedewed her ashes and venerable bones with the balsam of alms §;" and Mr. Strutt, in his *Manners and Customs of England*, tells us, "that of old it was usual to adorn the graves of the deceased with roses and other flowers (but more especially those of lovers, round whose tombs they have often planted rose trees): Some traces," he observes, "of this ancient custom are

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 335, 336.

† Ibid. p. 336. note.

‡ See Pratt's *Gleanings in Wales*, and Mason's *Elegy in a Church-yard in Wales*.

§ Bourne's *Antiq.* apud Brand, p. 45.



yet remaining in the church-yard of Oakley, in Surry, which is full of rose trees planted round the graves." \*

Many of the dramas of our immortal bard bear testimony to his partiality for this elegantly affectionate tribute ; a practice which there is reason to suppose was in the country at least not uncommon in his days : thus Capulet, in *Romeo and Juliet*, observes,

" Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse ;" †

and the Queen in *Hamlet* is represented as performing the ceremony at the grave of Ophelia:

" *Queen.* Sweets to the sweet: Farewell ! (Scattering Flowers.)  
I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife ;  
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have *strew'd thy grave.*" ‡

It was considered, likewise, as a duty incumbent on the survivors, annually to plant shrubs and flowers upon, and to tend and keep neat, the turf which covered the remains of their beloved friends ; in accordance with this usage, Mariana is drawn in *Pericles* decorating the tomb of her nurse :

————— " I will rob Tellus of her weed,  
To strew thy green with flowers: the yellows, blues,  
The purple violets, and marigolds,  
Shall, as a chaplet, hang upon thy grave,  
While summer days do last ;" §

and Arviragus, in *Cymbeline*, pathetically exclaims,

————— " With fairest flowers,  
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: Thou shalt not lack  
The flower, that's like thy face, pale primrose ; nor

\* Anglo Saxon Æra, vol. i. p. 69.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 337.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 219.

§ Ibid. vol. xxi. p. 297, 298.

The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath." \*

The only relic which yet exists in this country of a custom so interesting, is to be found in the practice of protecting the hallowed mound by twigs of osier, an attention to the mansions of the dead, which is still observable in most of the country-church-yards in the south of England.

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 576.—In Mr. Malkin's notes on Mason's Elegy, we have the following elegant and pleasing description of this pathetic custom, as it still exists in Wales:—"It is a very antient and general practice in Glamorgan," he remarks, "to plant flowers on the graves; so that many Church-yards have something like the splendour of a rich and various parterre. Besides this it is usual to strew the graves with flowers and ever-greens, within the Church as well as out of it, thrice at least every year, on the same principle of delicate respect as the stones are whitened.

"No flowers or ever-greens are permitted to be planted on graves but such as are sweet-scented: the pink and polyanthus, sweet williams, gilliflowers, and carnations, mignonette, thyme, hyssop, camomile, rosemary, make up the pious decoration of this consecrated garden. —

"The white rose is always planted on a virgin's tomb. The red rose is appropriated to the grave of any person distinguished for goodness, and especially benevolence of character.

"In the Easter week most generally the graves are newly dressed, and manured with fresh earth, when such flowers or ever-greens as may be wanted or wished for are planted. In the Whitsuntide Holidays, or rather the preceding week, the graves are again looked after, weeded, and other wise dressed, or, if necessary, planted again.—This work the nearest relations of the deceased always do with their own hands, and never by servants or hired persons. —

"When a young couple are to be married, their ways to the Church are strewed with sweet-scented flowers and ever-greens. When a young unmarried person dies, his or her ways to the grave are also strewed with sweet flowers and ever-greens; and on such occasions it is the usual phrase, that those persons are going to their nuptial beds, not to their graves. — None ever molest the flowers that grow on graves; for it is deemed a kind of sacrilege to do so. A relation or friend will occasionally take a pink, if it can be spared, or a sprig of thyme, from the grave of a beloved or respected person, to wear it in remembrance; but they never take much, lest they should deface the growth on the grave.—

"These elegant and highly pathetic customs of South Wales make the best impression on the mind. What can be more affecting than to see all the youth of both sexes in a village, and in every village through which the corpse passes, dressed in their best apparel, and strewing with sweet-scented flowers the ways along which one of their beloved neighbours goes to his or her marriage-bed."

Malkin's Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of  
South Wales, 4to. 1804. p. 606.



We have thus advanced in pursuit of our object, namely, *A Survey of Country Life during the Age of Shakspeare*, as far as a sketch of its manners and customs, resulting from a brief description of rural characters, holidays, and festivals, wakes, fairs, weddings, and burials, will carry us ; and we shall now proceed with the picture, by adding some account of those diversions of our ancestors which could not with propriety find a place under any of the topics that have been hitherto noticed ; endeavouring in our progress to render the great dramatic bard the chief illustrator of his own times.

## CHAPTER VIII.

VIEW OF COUNTRY LIFE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE CONTINUED — DIVERSIONS.

THE attempt to describe all the numerous rural diversions which were prevalent during the age of Shakspeare, would be, in the highest degree, superfluous; for the greatest part of them, it is evident, must remain, with such slight or gradual modification as to require but little notice. It will be, therefore, our endeavour, in the course of this chapter, after giving a catalogue of the principal country-diversions of the era in question, to dwell only upon those which are now either entirely obsolete, or which have subsequently undergone such alterations as to render their former state an object of novelty and curiosity.

This catalogue may be taken, with tolerable accuracy, from Randal Holme of Chester, and from Robert Burton; the former enumerating the games and diversions of the sixteenth century, and the latter those of the prior part of the seventeenth. If to these, we add the notices to be drawn from Shakspeare, the sketch will, there is reason to suppose, prove sufficiently extensive.

In the list of Randal Holme will be found the names of some juvenile sports, which are now perhaps no longer explicable; this poetical antiquary, however, shall speak for himself.

“ — They dare challenge for to throw the sledge;  
 To jumpe or lepe over ditch or hedge;  
 To wrastle, play at stool-balle, or to runne;  
 To pitch the barre or to shote offe the gunne;  
 To play at loggets, nineholes, or ten pinnes;  
 To trye it out at fote balle by the shinnes;  
 At ticke tacke, seize noddie, maw, or ruffe;  
 Hot-cockles, leape froggè, or blindman's buffe;  
 To drinke the halfer pottes, or deale att the whole canne;  
 To playe at chesse, or pue, and inke-horènnè;



To daunce the morris, playe at barley breake;  
 At alle exploytes a man can thynke or speake;  
 Att shove-grote, 'venter poynte, att crosse and pyle;  
 Att " Beshrewe him that's last att any style;"  
 Att lepyng over a Christmàs bon fyer,  
 Or att the " drawyng dame owte o' the myre;"  
 At " Shoote cock, Gregory," stoole-ball, and what not;  
 Pickè-poynt, top, and scourge to make him hot." \*

Burton, after mentioning *Hawking, Hunting, Fowling, and Fishing*, says, " many other sports and recreations there be, much in use, as *ringing, bowling, shooting, (with the bow,) keelpins, tronks, coits, pitching bars, hurling, wrestling, leaping, running, fencing, mustring, swimming, wasters, foiles, foot-ball, balown, quintan, &c.*, and many such which are the common recreations of the Country folks." † He subsequently adds *bull and bear baiting* as common to both countrymen and ‡ citizens, and then subjoins to the list of rural amusements, *dancing, singing, masking, mumming, and stage-players*. § For the ordinary recreations of *Winter* as well in the country as in town, he recommends "*cards, tables and dice, shovelboard, chess-play, the philosopher's game, small trunks, shuttle-cock, balliards, musick, masks, singing, dancing, ule games, frolicks, jests, riddles, catches, purposes, questions and commands, and merry tales.*" ||

From this statement it will immediately appear, that many of the rural diversions of this period are those likewise of the present day, and that no large portion of the catalogue can with propriety call for a more extended notice.

At the head of those which demand some brief elucidation, we shall place the *Itinerant Stage*, a country amusement, however, which, in the days of Elizabeth, was fast degenerating into contempt. The performance of secular plays by strolling companies of minstrels, had

\* MS. Harl. Libr., No. 2057, apud Strutt's Customs, &c.

† Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, 8th edit. fol. 1676. p. 169, 170.

‡ Ibid. p. 172.

§ Ibid. p. 174.

|| Ibid. p. 172.

been much encouraged for two or three centuries, not only by the vulgar, but by the nobility, into whose castles and halls they were gladly admitted, and handsomely rewarded. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the custom was still common, and Mr. Steevens, as a proof of it, has furnished us with the following entry from the fifth Earl of Northumberland's Household Book, which was begun in the year 1512:—

“ Rewards to Players.

“ Item, to be payd to the said Richard Gowge and Thomas Percy for rewards to players for playes playd in Chrystinmas by *stranegers* in my house after xxd. every play by estimacion somme xxxiijs. iiijd. Which ys appoynted to be paid to the said Richard Gowge and Thomas Percy at the said Christynmas in full contentacion of the said reward ys xxxiijs. iiijd.” \*

That these itinerants were still occasionally admitted into the country-mansions of the great, during the reign of Elizabeth, we have satisfactory evidence; but it may be sufficient here to remark, that Elizabeth herself was entertained with an historical play at Kenelworth Castle, by performers who came for that purpose from Coventry; and that Shakspeare has favoured us with another instance, by the introduction of the following scene in his *Taming of the Shrew*, supposed to have been written in 1594:—

“ Lord. Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds:—

Exit *Servant*.

Belike, some noble gentleman; that means,  
Travelling some journey, to repose him here.—

Re-enter a *Servant*.

How now? who is it?

*Serv.* An it please your honour,  
Players that offer service to your lordship.

*Lord.* Bid them come near:—

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 22. note 6.



## Enter Players.

Now, fellows, you are welcome.

1 *Play.* We thank your honour.

*Lord.* Do you intend to stay with me to night?

2 *Play.* So please your lordship to accept our duty.

*Lord.* With all my heart. —

Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery,

And give them friendly welcome every one:

Let them want nothing that my house affords.\*

From this passage it may be deduced, that the *itinerant* players of this period were held in no higher estimation than menial servants; an inference which is corroborated by referring to the anonymous play of *A Taming of a Shrew*, written about 1590, where the entry of the players is thus marked, “Enter two of the plaiers, *with packs at their backs*.” The abject condition of these *strollers*, Mr. Pope has attributed, perhaps too hastily, to the stationary performers of this reign; “the *top* of the profession,” he observes, “were then mere players, not gentlemen of the stage; they were led into the *buttery* by the steward, not placed at the lord’s table, or the lady’s † *toilette*;” a passage on which Mr. Malone has remarked, that Pope “seems not to have observed, that the players here introduced are *strollers*; and there is no reason to suppose that our author, Heminge, Burbage, Condell, &c. who were licensed by King James, were treated in this manner.” ‡

On the other hand Mr. Steevens supports the opinion of Pope by asserting, that “at the period when this comedy (*Taming of a Shrew*) was written, and for many years after, the profession of a player was scarcely allowed to be reputable. The imagined dignity,” he continues, “of those who did not belong to itinerant companies, is, therefore, unworthy consideration. I can as easily believe that the blundering editors of the first folio were suffered to lean their hands on Queen Elizabeth’s chair of state, as that they were admitted to the

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 21, 22, 25, 26.

† Pope’s Preface to his edition of Shakspeare, vide Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 183.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 25, note 3.

table of the Earl of Leicester, or the toilette of Lady Hunsden. Like Stephen, in *Every Man in his Humour*, the greatest indulgence our histrionic leaders could have expected, would have been a trencher and a napkin in the *buttery*." \*

The inference, however, which Mr. Malone has drawn, appears to have the authority of Shakspeare himself; for when Hamlet is informed of the arrival of the players, he exclaims, "How chanceth it, they travel; their *residence*, both in *reputation* and profit, was *better both ways*†;" a question, the drift of which even Mr. Steevens explains in the following words: "How chanceth it they travel?—i. e. *How happens it that they are become strollers?*—Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways—i. e. *To have remained in a settled theatre was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation.*" ‡ We have every reason, therefore, to suppose, that the difference between the *stroller* and the *licensed* performer was in Shakspeare's time considerable; and that the latter, although not the companion of lords and countesses, was held in a very respectable light, if his personal conduct were good, and became the occasional associate of the first literary characters of the age; while the former was frequently degraded beneath the rank of a servant, and, in the statute, indeed, 39 Eliz. ch. 4. he is classed with rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars.

This depreciation of the character of the *itinerant player*, towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, soon narrowed his field of action; the opulent became unwilling to admit into their houses persons thus legally branded; and the *stroller* was reduced to the necessity of exhibiting his talents at wakes and fairs, on temporary scaffolds and barrel heads; "if he pen for thee once," says Ben Jonson, addressing a strolling player, "thou shalt not need to travell, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a *blinde jade* and a *hamper*, and *stalk upon boards and barrel-heads* to an old crackt trumpet." §

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 26, note.

† Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 130, 131.

‡ Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 131. note 7.

§ Poetaster, 1601, vide Ben Jonson's Works, fol. edit. of 1640, vol. i. p. 267.



Many country-towns, indeed, at this period, were privileged to hold fairs by exhibiting a certain number of stage-plays at their annual fairs. Of these, Manningtree in Essex was one of the most celebrated; Heywood mentions it as notorious for yearly plays at its fair\*; and that its festivity on these occasions was equally known, is evident from Shakspeare's comparison of Falstaff to a "roasted Manningtree ox with a pudding in his belly."† The histrionic fame of Manningtree Mr. Malone proves by two quotations from Nashe and Decker; the former exclaiming in a poem, called *The choosing of Valentines*,

——— "Or see a play of strange moralitie,  
Shewen by bachelrie of *Manning-tree*,  
Whereto the countrie franklins flock-meale swarme;"

and the latter observing, in a tract entitled *Seven deadly Sinnes of London*, 1607, that "Cruelty has got another part to play; it is acted like the old *morals* at *Manningtree*."‡

This custom of stage-playing at annual fairs continued to support a few itinerant *companies*; but in general, after the halls of the nobility and gentry were shut against them §, they divided into small parties of three or four, and at length became mere jugglers, jesters, and *puppet-show* exhibitors. This last-mentioned amusement, indeed, and its professors, seem to have been known, in this country, under the name of *motions*, and *motion-men*, as early as the commencement

\* Apology for Actors, 1612.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 307.

‡ Vide Malone's note in Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 307.

§ By the statute of the 39 Eliz. any baron of the realm might license a company of players; but by the statute of first James I. "it is declared and enacted, that from thenceforth no authority given, or to be given or made, by any baron of this realm, or any other honourable personage of greater degree, unto any interlude players, minstrels, jugglers, bearward, or any other idle person or persons whatsoever, using any unlawful games or plays, to play or act, should be available to free or discharge the said persons, or any of them, from the pains and punishments of rogues, of vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, in the said statutes (those of Eliz.) mentioned."

of the sixteenth century \*; and the term, indeed, continued to be thus applied in the time of Jonson, who repeatedly uses it, in his *Bartholomew Fair*. † The degradation of the STROLLING companies, by the statutes of Elizabeth and James, rendered the exhibition of automaton figures, at this period, common throughout the kingdom. They are alluded to by Shakspeare under the appellation of *drolleries*; thus in the *Tempest*, Alonzo, alarmed at the *strange shapes bringing in the banquet*, exclaims

“ Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?”

a question to which Sebastian replies,

“ A LIVING drollery,” ‡

meaning by this epithet to distinguish them from the wooden puppets, the performers in the shows called *drolleries*.

A very popular annual diversion was celebrated, during the age of Shakspeare, and for more than twenty-five years after, on the *Cottswold Hills* in Gloucestershire. It has been said that the rural games which constituted this anniversary, were *founded* by one Robert Dover on the accession of James I.; § but it appears to be ascertained that Dover was only the *reviver*, with additional splendour, of sports which had been yearly exhibited, at an early period, on the same spot, and perhaps only discontinued for a short time before their revival in 1603. “ We may learn from Rudder’s History of Gloucestershire,” says Mr. Chalmers, “ that, in more early times, there was at Cottswold a customary meeting, every year, at Whitsontide, called

\* A character in *Gammar Gurtons Needle*, says Mr. Strutt, a comedy supposed to have been written A. D. 1517, declares he will go “ and travel with young Goose, the *motion-man*, for a puppet-player.”\* This reference, however, is inaccurate, for after a diligent perusal of the comedy in question, no such passage is to be found.

† Ben Jonson’s Works, fol. edit. 1640, vol. ii. p. 77. act v. sc. 4.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 112.

§ Vide Malone on the Chronological Order of Shakspeare’s Plays. Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. 2. p. 304.

\* Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes, p. 150, note b.



an *ale*, or *Whitson-ale*, which was attended by all the lads, and the lasses, of the *villegery*, who, annually, chose a Lord and Lady of the *Yule*, who were the authorized rulers of the *rustic revellers*. There is in the Church of Cirencester, says Rudder, an ancient monument, in *basso relievo*, that evinces the antiquity of those games, which were known to Shakspeare, before the accession of King James. They were known, also, to Drayton early in that reign: for upon the map of Gloucestershire, which precedes the *fourteenth song*, there is a representation of a *Whitsun-ale*, with a *may pole*, which last is inscribed ‘*Heigh for Cotswold.*’

“Ascending, next, faire Cotswold’s plaines,  
She revels with the *Shepherd’s* swaines.” \*

Mr. Strutt also is of opinion that the Cotswold games had a much higher origin than the time of Dover, and observes that they are evidently alluded to in the following lines by John Heywood the epigrammatist:

“He fometh like a bore, the beaste should seeme bolde,  
For he is as fierce as a *lyon of Cotswold.*” †

In confirmation of these statements it may be added, that Mr. Steevens and Mr. Chalmers have remarked, that in Randolph’s poems, 1638, is to be found “An eclogue on the noble assemblies *revived* on Cotswold hills by Mr. Robert Dover;” and in D’Avenant’s poems published the same year, a copy of verses “In celebration of the yearly *preserver* of the games at Cotswold.” ‡

The *Reviver* of these far-famed games was an enterprising attorney, a native of Barton on the Heath in Warwickshire, and consequently a near neighbour to Shakspeare’s country-residence. He obtained permission from King James to be the director of these annual sports, which he superintended in person for forty years. They were

\* Chalmers’s Supplemental Apology, p. 323, note s.

† Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes, p. 20.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 304, and Chalmers’s Apology, p. 324, note.

resorted to by prodigious multitudes of people, and by all the nobility and gentry for sixty miles round, until "the rascally rebellion," to adopt the phraseology of Anthony Wood, "was begun by the Presbyterians, which gave a stop to their proceedings, and spoiled all that was generous and ingenious elsewhere."\*

They consisted originally, and previous to the direction of Dover, merely of athletic exercises, such as wrestling, leaping, cudgel-playing, sword and buckler fighting, pitching the bar, throwing the sledge, tossing the pike, &c. &c. To these Dover added  *coursing*  for the gentlemen and  *dancing*  for the ladies; a temporary castle of boards being erected for the accommodation of the fair sex, and a silver collar adjudged as a prize for the fleetest greyhound.

To these two eras of the Cotswold Games Shakspeare alludes in the second part of  *King Henry IV.* , and in the  *Merry Wives of Windsor* . Justice Shallow refers to the original state of this diversion, when in the first of these dramas he enumerates among the  *swinge-bucklers* , "Will Squeele, a  *Cotsole*  man †;" and to Dover's improvement of them, when, in the second, he represents Slender asking Page, "How does your  *fallow greyhound* , Sir? I heard say, he was out-run on  *Cotsale* ."‡

Dover, tradition says, was highly delighted with the superintendence of these Games, and assumed, during his direction of them, a great deal of state and consequence. " *Captain Dover* ," relates Granger, a title which courtesy had probably bestowed on this public-spirited attorney, "had not only the permission of James I. to celebrate the Cotswold Games, but appeared in the very cloaths which that monarch had formerly worn §, and with much more dignity in his air and aspect."||

In 1636, there was published at London a small quarto, entitled, " *Annalia Dubrensis, upon the yearly Celebration of Mr. Robert*

\* Athenæ Oxon. vol. ii. p. 812.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 124.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 16.

§ They were given him by Endymion Porter, the King's servant.

|| Biographical History of England, vol. ii. p. 399, 8vo. edit. of 1775.



*Dover's Olympic Games, upon Cotswold Hills*, a book consisting entirely of recommendatory verses, written by Jonson, Drayton, Randolph, and many others, and with a print prefixed of Dover on horseback.

It is probable that, at this period, and for many subsequent years, there were several places in the kingdom which had Games somewhat similar to those of Cotswold, though not quite so celebrated; for Heath says, that a carnival of this kind was kept every year, about the middle of July, upon Halgaver-moor, near Bodwin in Cornwall; "resorted to by thousands of people. The sports and pastimes here held were so well liked," he relates, "by Charles the Second, when he touched here in his way to Sicily, that he became a brother of the jovial society. The custom," he adds, "of keeping this Carnival is said to be as old as the Saxons."\*

Of the four great rural diversions, *Hawking, Hunting, Fowling* and *Fishing*, the first will require the greatest share of our attention, as it is now nearly, if not altogether extinct, and was, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, the most prevalent and fashionable of all amusements.

To the very commencement, indeed, of the seventeenth century, we may point, as to the zenith of its popularity and reputation; for although it had been introduced into this country as early as the middle of the eighth century†, it was, until the commencement of the sixteenth, nearly, if not entirely, confined to the highest rank of society. During the reigns of Elizabeth and James, however, it descended from the nobility to the gentry and wealthy yeomanry, and no man could then have the smallest pretension to the character

\* Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 20, and Heath's *Description of Cornwall*, 1750.

† "About the year 750, Winifrid, or Boniface, a native of England, and archbishop of Mons, acquaints Ethelbald, a king of Kent, that he has sent him, one hawk, two falcons and two shields. And Hedilbert, a king of the Mercians, requests the same archbishop Winifrid to send him two falcons which have been trained to kill cranes. See *Epistol. Winifrid. (Bonifac.) Mogunt.* 1605. 1629. And in *Bibl. Patr.* tom. vi., and tom. xiii. p. 70." — Warton's *Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 221.

of a gentleman who kept not a cast of hawks. Of this a ludicrous instance is given us by Ben Jonson, in his *Every Man in his Humour*:

“ *Master Stephen.* How does my coussin Edward, uncle?

*Knowell.* O, well cousse, goe in and see: I doubt he be scarce stirring yet.

*Steph.* Uncle, afore I goe in, can you tell me, an’ he have ere a booke of the sciences of hawking, and hunting? I would faine borrow it.

*Know.* Why, I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

*Steph.* No, cousse; but I’ll practise against next yere uncle. I have bought me a hawke, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lacke nothing but a booke to keepe it by.

*Know.* O, most ridiculous.

*Steph.* Nay, looke you now, you are angrie, uncle: why you know, an’ a man have not skill in the hawking, and hunting-languages now-a-days, I’ll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greeke, or the Latine. He is for no gallant’s company without ’hem. — A fine jest ifaith! Slid a gentleman mun show himselfe like a gentleman!” \*

That the character of Master Stephen is not, in this respect, overcharged, but represents faithfully the fashionable folly of the age, is evident from many contemporary writers, and especially from that sensible old author Richard Brathwait, who, speaking of dogs and hawks, says, “ they are to be used only as pleasures and recreations, of which to speake sparingly were much better, than onely to discourse of them, *as if our whole reading were in them.* Neither doe I speake this without just cause; for I have noted this fault in many of our younger brood of *Gentry*, who either for want of education in learning, or their owne neglect of learning, have no sooner attained to the strength of making their fist a pearch for a *hawke*, but by *the helpe of some bookes of faulconry*, whereby they are instructed in the words of art, they will run division upon discourse of this pleasure: whereas, if at any time they be interrupted by occasion of some other conference, these *High-flyers* are presently to bee *mewed* up, for they are taken from their element.” †

Many of the best books on the Art of Falconry were written, indeed, as might be expected, during this universal rage for the

\* Jonson’s Works, fol. vol. i. p. 6. act i. sc. 1.

† Brathwait’s English Gentleman, 2d edit. 1633. p. 220.



amusement, and the *hawking coxcombs* of the day, adopting their language on all occasions, became necessarily obtrusive and pedantic in a disgusting degree. Of these manuals the most popular were written by George Turberville, Gervase Markham, and Edmund Best. \*

But the most detrimental consequence arising from the universality of this elegant diversion, was the immense expense that attended it, and which frequently involved those who were not opulent in utter ruin: a result not to be wondered at, when we find, that at the commencement of the seventeenth century, a goss-hawk and a tassel-hawk were not to be purchased for less than a hundred marks; and that in the reign of James I., Sir Thomas Monson gave one thousand pounds for a cast of hawks. Brathwait, in his usual strain of propriety, advises those who are not possessed of *good estates*, to give up all idea of this diversion, and exposes its indiscriminate pursuit in the following pleasant manner:—

“This pleasure,” observes he, “as it is a princely delight, so it moveth many to be so dearely enamoured of it, as they will undergoe any charge, rather than forgoe it: which makes mee recall to mind a merry tale which I have read, to this effect. Divers men having entered into discourse, touching the superfluous care (I will

\* “The Booke of Faulconrie, or Hawking, for the onely delight and pleasure of all Noblemen and Gentlemen: collected out of the best authours, as wel Italians as Frenchmen, and some English practises withall concernyng Faulconrie, the contentes whereof are to be seene in the next page folowyng. By Geo. Turberville, Gentleman. Nocet empta dolore voluptas. Imprinted at London for Chr. Barker, at the signe of the Grashoper in Paules Church-yarde, 1575.” To this was added, the “Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting;” and a re-impression of both, “newly revived, corrected, and augmented with many additions proper to these present times,” was published by Thomas Purfoot, in 1611.

Gervase Markham published in 1595 the edition of Dame Julyana Barne’s Treatise on Hawking and Hunting, which we have formerly noticed, and which was first printed by Caxton, and afterwards by Winkin De Worde; and in 1615, the first edition of his *Country Contentments*, which contains a treatise on Hawking; a work so popular, that it reached thirteen or fourteen editions.

Edmund Best, who trained and sold hawks, printed a treatise on Hawks and Hawking in 1619.



not say folly) of such as kept *dogs* and *hawkes* for *hawking*; one *Paulus* a *Florentine* stood up and spake: Not without cause (quoth hee) did that foole of *Millan* laugh at these; and being entreated to tell the tale, hee thus proceeded; upon a time (quoth he) there was a citizen of *Millan*, a physitian for such as were distracted or lunaticke; who tooke upon him within a certaine time to cure such as were brought unto him. And hee cured them after this sort: Hee had a plat of ground neere his house, and in it a pit of corrupt and stinking water, wherein he bound naked such as were mad to a stake, some of them knee-deepe, others to the groin, and some others deeper according to the degree of their madnesse, where hee so long pined them with water and hunger, till they seemed sound. Now amongst others, there was one brought, whom he had put thigh-deepe in water; who after fifteene dayes began to recover, beseeching the physitian that hee might be taken out of the water. The physitian taking compassion of him, tooke him out, but with this condition, that he should not goe out of the roome. Having obeyed him certaine dayes, he gave him liberty to walke up and downe the house, but not to passe the out-gate; while the rest of his companions, which were many, remaining in the water, diligently observed their physitian's command. Now it chanced, as on a time he stood at the gate, (for out hee durst not goe, for feare he should returne to the pit) he beckoned to a yong *gentleman* to come unto him, who had a *hawke* and two spaniels, being moved with the novelty thereof; for to his remembrance before hee fell mad, he had never seene the like. The yong *gentleman* being come unto him; Sir, (quoth he) I pray you hear mee a word or two, and answer mee at your pleasure: What is this you ride on (quoth he) and how do you imploy him? This is a horse (replied he) and I keepe him for *hawking*. But what call you that, you carry on your fist, and how do you use it? This is a *hawke* (said he) and I use to flie with it at pluver and partridge. But what (quoth he) are these which follow you, what doe they, or wherein doe they profit you? These are dogges (said he) and necessary for *hawking*, to finde and retrieve my



game. And what were these birds worth, for which you provide so many things, if you should reckon all you take for a whole yeere? Who answering, hee knew not well, but they were worth a very little, not above sixe crownes. The man replied; what then may be the charge you are at with your horse, dogges and hawke? Some fiftie crowns, said he. Whereat, as one wondering at the folly of the yong *gentleman*: Away, away Sir, I pray you quickly, and fly hence before our physitian returne home: for if he finde you here, as one that is maddest man alive, he will throw you into his pit, there to be cured with others, that have lost their wits; and more than all others, for he will set you chin-deepe in the water. Inferring hence, that the use or exercise of *hawking*, is the greatest folly, unlesse sometimes used by such as are of good estate, and for recreation sake.

“ Neither is this pleasure or recreation herein taxed, but the excessive and immoderate expence which many are at in maintaining this pleasure. Who as they should be wary in the expence of their *coine*, so much more circumspect in their expence of *time*. So as in a word, I could wish yong *gentlemen* never to bee so taken with this pleasure, as to lay aside the dispatch of more serious occasions, for a flight of feathers in the ayre.” \*

The same prudent advice occurs in an author who wrote immediately subsequent to Brathwait, and who, though a lover of the diversion, stigmatises the folly of its general adoption. “ As for hawking,” says he, “ I commend it in some, condemne it in others; in men of qualitie whose estates will well support it, I commend it as a generous and noble qualitie; but in men of meane ranke and religious men †, I condemne it with Blesensis, as an idle and foolish vanitie; for I have ever thought it a kinde of madnesse for such men, to bestow ten pounds in feathers, which at one blast might be

\* Brathwait's *English Gentleman*, 2d edit. 1633. p. 201—203.

† Henry Peacham, who remarks of Hawking, that it is a recreation “ very commendable and befitting a Noble or Gentleman to exercise,” adds, that “ by the Canon Law, Hawking was forbidden unto Clergie.” The *Compleat Gentleman*, 2d edit. p. 212, 213.

blowne away, and to buy a momentary monethly pleasure with the labours and expence of a whole yeare.”\*

It is to be regretted, however, that the use of the gun has superseded, among the opulent, the pursuit of this far more elegant and picturesque recreation. As intimately connected, for many centuries, with the romantic manners and costume of our ancient nobility and gentry, it now possesses peculiar charms for the poet and the antiquary, and we look back upon the detail of this pastime, and all its magnificent establishments, with a portion of that interest which time has conferred upon the splendid pageantries of chivalry. Of the estimation in which it was held, and of the pleasure which it produced, in Shakspeare's time, there are not wanting numerous proofs: he has himself frequently alluded to it, and the poets Turberville, Gascoign, and Sydney, have delighted to expatiate on its praises, and to adopt its technical phraseology. But the most interesting eulogia, the most striking pictures of this diversion, appear to us to be derived from a few strokes in Brathwait, Nash, and Massinger; writers who, publishing shortly after Shakspeare's death, and describing the amusement of their youthful days, of course delineate the features as they existed in Shakspeare's age, with as much, if not greater accuracy than the still earlier contemporaries of the bard.

“Hawking,” remarks Brathwait, “is a pleasure for high and mounting spirits: such as will not stoope to inferiour lures, having their mindes so farre above, as they scorne to partake with them. It is rare to consider, how a wilde *bird* should bee so brought to hand, and so well managed as to make us such pleasure in the ayre: but most of all to forgoe her native liberty and feeding, and returne to her former servitude and diet. But in this, as in the rest, we are taught to admire the great goodnesse and bounty of God, who hath not only given us the birds of the aire, with their flesh to feede us, with their voice to cheere us, but with their flight to delight us.”†

\* Vide Quaternio, or a Fourefold Way to a Happie Life, set forth in a Dialogue betweene a Countryman and a Citizen, a Divine and a Lawyer. Per Tho. Nash, Philopolitean, 1633.

† English Gentleman, p. 200.



“ I have in my youthfull dayes,” relates Nash, “ beene as glad as ever I was to come from Schoole, to see a little martin in the dead time of the yeare, when the winter had put on her whitest coat, and the frosts had sealed up the brookes and rivers, to make her way through the midst of a multitude of fowle-mouth’d ravenous crows and kites, which pursued her with more hydeous cryes and clamours, than did Coll the dog, and Malkin the maide, the Fox in the Apologue.

“ When the geese for feare flew over the trees,  
And out of their hives came the swarme of bees :”

*Chaucer in his Nunes Priests Tale.*

and maugre all their oppositions pulled down her prey, bigger than herselfe, being mounted aloft, steeple-high downe to the ground. And to heare an accipitrary relate againe, how he went forth in a cleere, calme, and sun-shine evening, about an houre before the sunne did usually maske himselfe, unto the river, where finding of a mallard, he whistled off his faulcon, and how shee flew from him as if shee would never have turned head againe, yet presently upon a shoote came in, how then by degrees, by little and little, by flying about and about, she mounted so high, untill shee had lessened herselfe to the view of the beholder, to the shape of a pigeon or partridge, and had made the height of the moone the place of her flight, how presently upon the landing of the fowle, shee came downe like a stone and enewed it, and suddenly got up againe, and suddenly upon a second landing came downe againe, and missing of it, in the downe come recovered it, beyond expectation, to the admiration of the beholder, at a long; and to heare him tell a third time, how he went forth early in a winter’s morning, to the woody fields and pastures to fly the cocke, where having by the little white feather in his tayle discovered him in a brake, he cast of a tassel gentle, and how he never ceased in his circular motion, untill he had recovered his place, how suddenly upon the flushing of the cocke he came downe, and missing of it in the downcome, what working there was on both

sides, how the cocke mounted, as if he would have pierced the skies ; how the hawke flew a contrary way, untill he had made the winde his friend, how then by degrees he got up, yet never offered to come in, untill he had got the advantage of the higher ground, how then he made in, what speed the cocke made to save himselfe, and what hasty pursuit the hawke made, and how after two long miles flight killed it, yet in killing of it killed himselfe. These discourses I love to heare, and can well be content to be an eye-witnesse of the sport, when my occasions will permit." \*

To this lively and minute detail, which brings the scene immediately before our eyes, we must be allowed to add the poetical picture of Massinger, which, as Mr. Gifford has justly observed, "is from the hand of a great master."

—————" In the afternoon,  
For we will have variety of delights,  
We'll to the field again, no game shall rise  
But we'll be ready for't; ———  
————— for the pye or jay, a sparrow hawk  
Flies from the fist ; the crow so near pursued,  
Shall be compell'd to seek protection under  
Our horses bellies ; a hearn put from her siege,  
And a pistol shot off in her breech, shall mount  
So high, that, to your view, she'll seem to soar  
Above the middle region of the air :  
A cast of haggard falcons, by me mann'd,  
Eying the prey at first, appear as if  
They did turn tail ; but with their labouring wings  
Getting above her, with a thought their pinions  
Clearing the purer element, make in,  
And by turns bind with her † ; the frighted fowl,  
Lying at her defence upon her back,  
With her dreadful beak, awhile defers her death,  
But by degrees forced down, we part the fray,  
And feast upon her. ———

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\* Quaternio, 1633. It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to add, that the writer of this work must not be confounded with Thos. Nash the author of *Pierce Penniless*, who died before 1606.

† To bind with is to tire or seize. — Gentleman's Recreation.



————— Then, for an evening flight,  
 A tiercel gentle, which I call, my masters,  
 As he were sent a messenger to the moon,  
 In such a place flies, as he seems to say,  
 See me, or see me not ! the partridge sprung,  
 He makes his stoop ; but wanting breath, is forced  
 To cancelier \* ; then, with such speed as if  
 He carried lightning in his wings, he strikes  
 The trembling bird, who even in death appears  
 Proud to be made his quarry." †

After these praises and general description of hawking, it will be proper to mention the various kinds of hawks used for this diversion, the different modes of exercising it, and a few of the most interesting particulars relative to the training of the birds.

It will be found, on consulting the *Treatise on Hawking*, by Dame Juliana Barnes, printed by Winkin De Worde in 1496, the *Gentleman's Academie*, by Markham, 1595, and the *Jewel for Gentry*, published in 1614, that during this space of time, the species of hawks employed, and the several ranks of society to which they were appropriated, had scarcely, if at all varied. The following catalogue is, therefore, taken from the ancient Treatise :

" An eagle, a bawter (a vulture), a melown ; these belong unto an Emperor.

A Gerfalcon : a Tercell of a Gerfalcon are due to a King.

There is a Falcon gentle, and a Tercel gentle ; and these be for a Prince.

There is a Falcon of the rock ; and that is for a Duke.

There is a Falcon peregrine ; and that is for an earl.

Also there is a Bastard ; and that hawk is for a baron.

There is a Sacre and a Sacret ; and these ben for a knight.

There is a Lanare and a Lanrell ; and these belong to a squire.

\* *To cancelier*. " Cancelier is when a high-flown hawk in her stooping, turneth two or three times upon the wing, to recover herself before she seizeth her prey."— *Gentleman's Recreation*.

† Gifford's *Massinger*, vol. iv. p. 136, 137.— The *Guardian*, from which this passage is taken, was licensed in October 1633.

There is a Merlyon ; and that hawk is for a lady.

There is an Hoby ; and that hawk is for a young man.

And these *ben* hawks of the *tour* and ben both *illuryd* to be called and reclaimed.

And yet there ben more kinds of hawks.

There is a Goshawk ; and that hawk is for a yeoman.

There is a Tercel ; and that is for a poor man.

There is a Sparehawk ; she is an hawk for a priest.

There is a Muskyte ; and he is for an holy-water clerk." \*

To this list the *Jewel for Gentre* adds

A Kesterel, for a knave or servant.

Many of these birds were held in such high estimation by our crowned heads and nobility, that several severe edicts were issued for the preservation of their eggs. These were mitigated in the reign of Elizabeth ; but still if any person was convicted of taking or destroying the eggs of the falcon, gos-hawk or laner, he was liable to suffer imprisonment for three months, and was obliged to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, or remain confined until he did.

Hawking was divided into two branches, land and water hawking, and the latter was usually considered as producing the most sport. The diversion of hawking was pursued either on horseback or on foot : on the former in the fields and open country ; on the latter, in woods, coverts, and on the banks of rivers. When on foot, the sportsman had the assistance of a stout pole, for the purpose of leaping over ditches, rivulets, &c. ; a circumstance which we learn from the chronicle of Hall, where the historian tells us that Henry the Eighth, pursuing his hawk on foot, in attempting to leap over a ditch of muddy water with his pole, it broke, and precipitated the monarch head-foremost into the mud, where, had it not been for the timely assistance of one of his footmen, named John Moody, he would soon have been suffocated ; " and so," concludes the venerable chronicler, " God of hys goodnesse preserved him." †

\* Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 57, 58.

† Hall's *Life of Henry VIII.* sub an. xvj.



The game pursued in hawking included a vast variety of birds, many of which, once fashionable articles of the table, have now ceased to be objects of the culinary art. Of those which are now obsolete among epicures may be enumerated, herons, bitterns, swans, cranes, curlews, sheldrakes, cootes, peacocks; of those still in use, teal, mallard, geese, ducks, pheasants, quails, partridges, plovers, doves, turtles, snipes, woodcocks, rooks, larks, starlings, and sparrows.

Hawking, notwithstanding the occasional fatigue and hazard which it produced, was a favourite diversion among the ladies, who in the pursuit of it, according to a writer of the seventeenth century, did not hesitate to assume the male attire and posture. "The \* Bury ladies," observes he, "that used *hawking* and hunting, were once in a great vaine of wearing breeches." † The same author has preserved a hawking anecdote of some humour, and which occurred, likewise, at the same place: "Sir Thomas Jermin," he relates, "going out with his servants, and brooke hawkes one evening, at Bury, they were no sooner abroad, but fowle were found, and he called out to one of his falconers, Off with your jerkin; the fellow being into the wind did not heare him; at which he stormed, and still cried out, Off with your jerkin, you knave, off with your jerkin; now it fell out that there was, at that instant, a plaine townsman of Bury, in a freeze jerkin, stood betwixt him and his falconer, who seeing Sir Thomas in such a rage, and thinking he had spoken to him, unbuttoned himself amaine, threw off his jerkin, and besought his worshippe not to be offended, for he would off with his doublet too, to give him content." ‡

That the *training* of hawks was a work of labour, difficulty, and skill, and that the person upon whom the task devolved, was highly prized, and supported at a great expense, may be readily imagined. The *Falconer* was, indeed, an officer of high importance in the household of the opulent, and his whole time was absorbed in the duties of

\* Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk.

† Anonymous MS., entitled "Merry Passages and Jeasts." Bibl. Harl. 6395. Art. cccliv.

‡ Merry Passages and Jeasts, art. ccxxiii.

his station. That these were various and incessant may be deduced from the following curious character of a *falconer*, drawn by a satirist of 1615. \*

“ A falkoner is the egge of a tame pullett, hatcht up among hawkes and spaniels. Hee hath in his minority conversed with kestrils and yong hobbies: but growing up he begins to handle the lure, and look a fawlcon in the face. All his learning makes him but a new linguist; for to have studied and practised the termes of Hawke’s Dictionary, is enough to excuse his wit, manners, and humanity. He hath too many trades to thrive; and yet if hee had fewer, hee would thrive lesse. Hee need not be envied therefore, for a monopolie, though he be barber-surgeon, physitian, and apothecary, before he commences *hawk-leech*; for though he exercise all these, and the art of bow-strings together, his patients be compelled to pay him no further, then they be able. Hawkes be his object, that is, his knowledge, admiration, labour, and all; they be indeed his idoll, or mistresse, be they male or female: to them he consecrates his amorous ditties, which be no sooner framed then hallowed; nor should he doubt to overcome the fairest, seeing he reclaimes such haggards, and courts every one with a peculiar dialect. That he is truly affected to his sweetheart in her fether-bed, appeares by the sequele, himselfe being sensible of the same misery, for they be both mewed up together: but he still chuses the worst pennance, by chusing rather an ale-house, or a cellar, for his moulting place than the hawke’s mew.” †

The training of Hawks consisted principally in the *manning*, *luring*, *flying*, and *hooding* them. Of these, the first and second imply a perfect familiarity with the man, and a perfect obedience to his voice and commands, especially that of returning to the fist at the

\* The Falconer was sometimes denominated the *Ostringer* or *Sperviter*: “ they be called Ostringers,” says Markham, “ which are the keepers of Goshawkes or Tercelles, and those which keepe Sparrow-hawkes or Muskets are called *Sperviters*, and those which keepe any other kinde of hawke being long-winged are termed *Falconers*.” Gentleman’s Academie or Booke of S. Alban’s, fol. 8.

† Satyirical Essayes, Characters, &c., by John Stephens, 1615, 16mo. 1st edit.



appointed signal.\* The *flying* includes the appropriation of peculiar hawks to peculiar game; thus the *Faulcon gentle*, which, according to Gervase Markham, is the principal of hawks, and adapted either for the field or river, will fly at the partridge or the mallard; the *Ger-faulcon* will fly at the heron; the *Saker* at the crane or bittern; the *Lanner* at the partridge, pheasant, or chooffe; the *Barbary Faulcon* at the partridge only; the *Merlin* and the *Hobby* at the lark, or any small bird; the *Goshawk* or *Tercel* at the partridge, pheasant, or hare; the *Sparrow-hawk* at the partridge or blackbird, and the *Musket* at the bush only. †

The *hooding* of hawks, as it embraces many technical terms, which have been adopted by our poets, and among the rest, by Shakspeare, will require a more extended explanation, and this we shall give in the words of Mr. Strutt. "When the hawk," he observes, "was not flying at her game, she was usually hood-winked, with a cap or hood provided for that purpose, and fitted to her head; and this hood was worn abroad, as well as at home. All hawks taken upon 'the fist,' the term used for carrying them upon the hand, had straps of leather called *jesses* ‡, put about their legs; the jesses were made sufficiently

\* "All hawks," says Markham, "generally are *manned* after one manner, that is to say, by watching and keeping them from sleep, by a continuall carrying them upon your fist, and by a most familiar stroaking and playing with them, with the wing of a dead fowl, or such like, and by often gazing and looking them in the face, with a loving and gentle countenance, and so making them acquainted with the man.

"After your hawks are manned, you shall bring them to the *Lure*\* by easie degrees, as first, making them jump unto the fist, after fall upon the lure, then come to the voice, and lastly, to know the voice and lure so perfectly, that either upon the sound of the one, sight of the other, she will presently come in, and be most obedient; which may easily be performed, by giving her reward when she doth your pleasure, and making her tast when she disobeyeth: short wing'd hawks shall be called to the fist only, and not to the lure; neither shall you use unto them the loudnesse and variety of voice, which you do to the long winged hawks, but only bring them to the fist by chiriping your lips together, or else by the whistle." *Countrey Contentments*, 11th edit. p. 30.

† *Country Contentments*, p. 29.

‡ Though it sometimes appears that the jesses were made of silk.

\* An object stuffed like that kind of bird which the hawk was designed to pursue. The use of the *lure* was to tempt him back after he had flown. — Steevens.



long, for the knots to appear between the middle and the little fingers of the hand that held them, so that the *lunes*, or small thongs of leather, might be fastened to them with two *tyrrits*, or rings; and the *lunes* were loosely wound round the little finger; lastly, their legs were adorned with *bells*, fastened with rings of leather, each leg having one; and the leathers, to which the bells were attached, were denominated *bewits*; and to the *bewits* was added the *creance*, or long thread, by which the bird in tutoring, was drawn back, after she had been permitted to fly; and this was called the *reclaiming* of the hawk. The *bewits*, we are informed, were useful to keep the hawks from *winding when she bated*, that is, when she fluttered her wings to fly after her game. Respecting the bells, it is particularly recommended that they should not be too heavy, to impede the flight of the bird; and that they should be of equal weight, sonorous, shrill, and musical; not both of one sound, but the one a semitone below the other\*; they ought not to be broken, especially in the sounding part, because, in that case, the sound emitted would be dull and unpleasing. There is, says the Book of St. Alban's, great choice of sparrow-hawk bells, and they are cheap enough; but for gos-hawk bells, those made at Milan are called the best; and, indeed, they are excellent; for they are commonly sounded with † silver, and charged for accordingly.†

\* "These observations are taken from 'The Boke of Saint Albans;' a subsequent edition says, 'at least a note under.'"

† "I am told, that silver being mixed with the metal, when the bells are cast, adds much to the sweetness of the sound; and hence probably the allusion of Shakspeare, when he says,

'How silver sweet sound lovers tongues by night.'

‡ Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 28.

\* This subsequent edition, to which Mr. Strutt alludes, is probably that by Gervase Markham, who tells us under the head of "Hawkes belles:" "The bells which your hawke shal weare, looke in any wise that they be not too heavy, whereby they overloade hir, neither that one be heavier than an other, but both of like weight: looke also, that they be well sounding and shrill, yet not both of one sound, but one at least a note under the other." He adds "of spar-hawkes belles there is choise enough, and the charge little, by reason that the store thereof is great. But for goshawks sometimes belles of Millaine were supposed to bee the best, and undoubtedly they be excellent, for that they are sounded with silver, and the price of them is thereafter, but there be now," he observes, "used belles out of the lowe Countries which are approoved to be passing good, for they are principally sorted, they are well sounded, and sweet of ringing, with a pleasant shrilnesse, and excellently well lasting." Gentleman's Academie, fol. 12.



Thomas Heywood, in his play, entitled *A Woman killed with Kindness*, and acted before 1604, has a passage on falconry, four lines of which have been quoted by Mr. Strutt, as allusive to the toning of the Milan bells; but as the whole is highly descriptive of the diversion, and is of no great length, we shall venture to transcribe it, with the exception of a few lines, entire:

“ *Sir Charles.* So; well cast off: aloft, aloft; well flown.  
O, now she takes her at the *sowse*, and strikes her down  
To th’ earth, like a swift thunder clap. —  
Now she hath seized the fowl, and ’gins to plume her;  
*Rebeck* her not; rather stand still and *check* her.  
So: seize her *gets*, her *jesses*, and her *bells*;  
Away.

*Sir Francis.* My hawk kill’d too!

*Sir Charles.* Aye, but ’twas at the *querre*,  
Not at the *mount*, like mine.

*Sir Fran.* Judgment, my masters.

*Cranwell.* Your’s miss’d her at the *ferre*. \*

*Wendoll.* Aye, but our Merlin first had *plumed* the fowl,  
And twice *renew’d* her from the river too;  
Her bells, Sir Francis, had not both one weight,  
Nor was one semi-tune above the other:  
Methinks these Milain bells do sound too full,  
And spoil the mounting of your hawk. —

*Sir Fran.* ——— Mine likewise seized a fowl  
Within her talons; and you saw her paws  
Full of the feathers: both her petty *singles*,  
And her *long singles* griped her more than other;  
The *terrials* of her legs were stained with blood:

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\* These techical terms may admit of some explanation, from the following passage in Markham’s edition of the Booke of St. Alban’s, 1595, where speaking of the fowl being found in a river or pit, he adds, “if shee (the hawk) nyme or take the further side of the river or pit from you, then she slaieth the foule at *fere juttie*: but if she kill it on that side that you are on yourselfe, as many times it chanceth, then you shall say shee killed the foule at the *jutty ferry*: if your hawke nime the foule aloft, you shal say she tooke it at the *mount*. If you see store of mallards separate from the river and feeding in the field, if your hawke flee covertly under hedges, or close by the ground, by which means she nymeth one of them before they can rise, you shall say, that foule was killed at the *querre*.” Gentleman’s Academie, fol. 12.

Not of the fowl only, she did discomfit  
Some of her feathers; but she brake away." \*

To hawking and the language of falconry, Shakspeare, as we have previously observed, has frequently had recourse, and he has selected the terms with his wonted propriety and effect; of this five or six instances will be adequate proof. Othello, in allusion to Desdemona, exclaims :

————— " If I do prove her *haggard*,  
Though that her *jesses* were my dear heart-strings,  
I'd *whistle her off*, and *let her down the wind*,  
To prey at fortune." †

A *haggard* is a species of hawk wild and difficult to be reclaimed, and which, if not well trained, flies indiscriminately at every bird; a fault to which Shakspeare again refers in his *Twelfth Night*, where Viola tells the Clown that

" He must observe their mood on whom he jests —  
And, like the *haggard*, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye." ‡

The phrase to *whistle off* will be best explained by a simile in Burton, which opens his chapter on Air. " As a long-winged hawk when he is first *whistled off the fist*, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the air, still soaring higher and higher, till he be come to his full pitch, and in the end when the game is sprung, comes down amain, and *stoops* upon a sudden." § To *let a hawk down the wind*, was to dismiss it as worthless.

Petruchio, soliloquising on the means which he had adopted, in order to tame his termagant bride, says emphatically,

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 436.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. p. 387. Act iii. sc. 3.

‡ Ibid., vol. v. p. 339. Act iii. sc. 1.

§ Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, fol. 8th edit. p. 152.



“ My falcon now is sharp, and passing empty ;  
 And, till she stoop, she must not be full-gorged,  
 For then she never looks upon her lure.  
 Another way I have to man my haggard, }  
 To make her come, and know her keeper's call,  
 That is, — to watch her, as we watch these kites,  
 That *bate*, and beat, and will not be obedient.” \*

To *bate* in this passage means to *flutter* or *beat the wings*, as striving to fly away, and is metaphorically used in the following address of Juliet to the night :

————— “ Come, civil night, ———  
 Hood my unmann'd blood *bating* in my cheeks,  
 With thy black mantle.” †

The same tragedy furnishes us with another obligation to falconry, where the love-sick maiden recalls Romeo in these terms :

“ Hist ! Romeo, hist ! ——— O, for a falconer's voice  
 To lure this tassel-gentle back again.” ‡

Falstaff's page in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is appositely compared to the *eyas-musket*, an unfledged hawk of the smallest species :

“ Mrs. Ford. How now, my *eyas-musket* ? What news with you ?” §

*Eyas-musket*, remarks Mr. Steevens, is the same as *infant Lilliputian*, and he subjoins an illustrative passage from Spenser :

————— “ youthful gay,  
 Like *eyas-hawke*, up mounts into the skies,  
 His *newly budded* pinions to essay.” ||

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 135. Act iv. sc. 1.

† Ibid. vol. xx. p. 147. Act iii. sc. 2.

‡ Ibid. p. 93. Act ii. sc. 2. § Ibid. vol. v. p. 126. Act iii. sc. 3.

|| Fairy Queen, book i. cant. 11. stan. 34. “ Eyes, or nias,” says Mr. Douce, “ is a term borrowed from the French *niais*, which means any young bird in the nest, *avis in*

If the commencement of the seventeenth century, saw *Hawking* the most splendid and prevalent amusement of the nobility and gentry, the close had to witness its decline and abolition ; it gave way to a more sure and expeditious, though, perhaps, less interesting mode of killing game, and the adoption of the gun had, before the year 1700, almost entirely banished the art of the Falconer.

The costume of the next great amusement of the country, that of HUNTING, differs at present in few essential points from what it was in the sixteenth century. The chief variations may be included in the disuse of killing game in inclosures, and in the adoption of more speed, and less fatigue and stratagem in the open chace ; or in other words, it is the strength and speed of the fleet blood-horse, and not of the athletic and active huntsman, or old steady-paced hunter, that now decide the sport. “ In the modern chace,” observes Mr Haslewood, “ the lithsomness of youth is no longer excited to pursue the animals. Attendant footmen are discontinued and forgotten ; while the active and eager rustic with a hunting pole, wont to be foremost, has long forsaken the field, nor is there a trace of the character known, except in a country of deep clay, as parts of Sussex. Few years will pass ere the old steady paced English hunter and the gabbling beagle will be equally obsolete. All the sport now consists of speed. A hare is hurried to death by dwarf fox-hounds, and a leash murdered in a shorter period than a single one could generally struggle for existence. The hunter boasts a cross of blood, or, in plainer phrase, a racer, sufficiently professed to render a country sweepstakes doubtful. This variation is by no means an improvement, and can only advantage the plethoric citizen, who seeks to combat the somnolency arising from civic festivals by a short and sudden excess of exercise.”\*

The mode of hunting, indeed, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, still continued an emblem of, and a fit preparation for, the fatigues of

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*nido.* It is the first of five several names by which a falcon is called during its first year.”  
Illustrations, vol. i. p. 74.

\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. x. p. 231.



war; nor was it unusual to consider the toils of the chace as initiatory to those of the camp. "The old Lord Gray, our English Achilles," says Peacham, "when hee was Deputie of Ireland, to inure his sonnes for the warre, would usually in the depth of winter, in frost, snow, raine, and what weather so ever fell, cause them at midnight to be raised out of their beds, and carried abroad on hunting till the next morning; then perhaps come wet and cold home, having for a breakefast, a browne loafe and a mouldie cheese, or (which is ten times worse) a dish of Irish butter \*;" and Dekkar, in his praise of hunting, remarks, that "it is a very true picture of warre, nay, it is a warre in itselfe, for engines are brought into the field, stratagems are contrived, ambushes are laide, onsets are given, alarams stricke up, brave encounters are made, fierce assailings are resisted by strength, by courage, or by policie: the enemie is pursued, and the pursuers never give over till they have him in execution, then is a retreate sounded, then are spoiles divided, then come they home wearied, but yet crowned with honour and victorie. And as in battailes, there bee several manners of fight; so in the pastime of hunting, there are several degrees of game. Some hunt the lyon, &c. — others pursue the long-lived hart, the couragious stag, or the nimble footed deere; these are the noblest hunters, and they exercise the noblest game: these by following the chace, get strength of bodie, a free, and undisquieted minde, magnanimitie of spirit, alacritie of heart, and unwearisomnesse to breake through the hardest labours: their pleasures are not insatiable, but are contented to be kept within limits, for these hunt within parkes inclosed, or within bounded forests. The hunting of the hare teaches feare to be bold, and puts simplicitie to her shifts, that she growes cunning and provident; &c." †

Hunting in inclosures, that is, in parks, chases, and forests, where the game was inclosed with a fence-work of netting stretched on posts driven into the ground, appears to have been the custom of this

\* Complete Gentleman, 2nd edit., p. 212, 213.

† Dekkar's Villanies discovered by lanthorne and candle-light, &c. 1616.

country from the time of Edward the Second to the middle of the seventeenth century. The manuscript treatise of William Twici, grand huntsman to Edward the Second, entitled *Le Art De Venerie, le quel maistre Guillame Twici venour le roy d'Angleterre fist en son temps per aprendre Autres*\*; the nearly contemporary manuscript translation of John Gyfford, with the title of *A book of Venerie, dialogue* † wise; the tract called *The Maistre of the Game* ‡, in manuscript also, and written by the chief huntsman of Henry the Fourth, for the instruction of his son, afterwards Henry the Fifth; the *Book of St. Albans*, the first printed treatise on the subject, and written by the sister of Lord Berners, when prioress at the nunnery of Sopewell, about 1481; the tract on the *Noble Art of Venerie*, annexed to Turberville on Falconrie 1575, and supposed to have been written by George Gascoigne, and the re-impression of the same in 1611, all describe the ceremonies and preparations necessary for the pursuit of this, now obsolete, mode of hunting, which, from its luxury and effeminacy, forms a perfect contrast to the manly fatigues of the open chace.

This style of hunting, indeed, exhibited great splendour and pomp, and was certainly a very imposing spectacle; but the slaughter must have been easy and great, and the sport therefore proportionally less interesting. When the king, the great barons, or dignified clergy, selected this mode of the diversion, in which either bows or greyhounds were used, the masters of the game and the park-keepers prepared all things essential for the purpose; and, if it were a royal hunt, the sheriff of the county furnished stabling for the king's horses, and carts for the dead game. A number of temporary buildings, covered with green boughs, to shade the company from the heat of the sun or bad weather, were erected by the foresters in a proper situation, and on the morning of the day chosen for the sport, the master of the game and his officers saw the greyhounds duly placed, and a person

\* Vide Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. ii. p. 221. note.

† MS. Cotton Library, Vespasianus, B. 12.

‡ MS. Digb. 182. Bibl. Bodl. Warton, vol. ii. p. 221. note m.



appointed to announce, by the different intonations of his horn, the species of game turned out, so that the company might be prepared for its reception when it broke cover.

The enclosure being guarded by officers or retainers, placed at equal distances, to prevent the multitude prematurely rousing the game, the grand huntsman, as soon as the king, nobility, or gentry had taken their respective stations, sounded three long mootes or blasts with the horn, as a signal for the uncoupling of the hart-hounds, when the game, driven by the manœuvres of the huntsman, passed the lodges where the company were waiting, and were either shot from their bows, or individuals, starting from the groupe, pursued the deer with greyhounds.\*

We find, from the poems of Gascoigne and Turberville, as they appear in their Book of Hunting of 1575, that every accommodation which beautiful scenery and epicurean fare could produce, was thought essential to this branch of the sport. Turberville, describing the scene chosen for the company to take their stations, says —

“ The place should first be pight, on pleasant gladsome greene,  
Yet under shade of stately trees, where little sunne is seene :  
And neare some fountaine spring, whose chrystall running streames  
May helpe to coole the parching heate, ycaught by Phœbus beames.  
The place appoynted thus, it neyther shall be clad  
With arras nor with tapystry, such paltrie were too bad :  
Ne yet those hote perfumes, whereof proude courtes do smell,  
May once presume in such a place, or paradise to dwell.  
Away with fayned fresh, as broken boughes or leaves,  
Away, away, with forced flowers, ygathered from their greaves :  
This place must of itselfe, afforde such sweet delight,  
And eke such shewe, as better may content the greedie sight ;  
Where sundry sortes of hewes, which growe upon the ground,  
May seeme, indeede, such tapystry, as we by arte, have found.  
Where fresh and fragrant flowers, may skorne the courtier's cost,  
Which daubes himselfe with syvet, muske, and many an ointment lost,

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\* The substance of this account is taken from *The Maistre of the Game*, written for the use of Prince Henry.

Where sweetest singing byrdes, may make such melodye,  
 As Pan, nor yet Apollo's arte, can sounde such harmonye.  
 Where breath of westerne windes, may calmly yeld content,  
 Where casements neede not opened be, where air is never pent.  
 Where shade may serve for shryne, and yet the sunne at hande,  
 Where beautie need not quake for colde, ne yet with sunne be tande.  
 In fine and to conclude, where pleasure dwels at large,  
 Which princes seeke in pallaces, with payne and costly charge.  
 Then such a place once founde, the *Butler* first appeares, —  
 Then comes the captaine *Cooke* —

These gentlemen of the household, it seems, came well provided; the farmer, with wines and ales "in bottles and in barrells," and the latter with *colde loynes of veale, colde capon, beefe and goose, pigeon pyes, mutton colde, neates tongs poudred well, gambones of the hogge, saulsages and savery knackes*. \*

Of the stag-chace in the *open* country, and of the ceremonies and costume attending it, at the castellated mansions of the Baron and opulent Squire, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a tolerably accurate idea may be formed from the following statement, drawn up from the ancient writers on the subject, and from the works of the ingenious antiquary Strutt.

The inhabitants of the castle, and the hunters, were usually awakened very early in the morning by the lively sounding of the bugles, after which it was not unusual for two or more minstrels to sing an appropriate roundelay, beneath the windows of the master of the mansion, accompanied by the deep and mellow chorus of the attending rangers and falconers. Shakspeare alludes to a song of this kind in his *Romeo and Juliet* †, which has been preserved entire by Thomas Ravenscroft ‡, and commences thus: —

\* Vide *Censura Literaria*, vol. x. p. 237, 238.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 173. Act iii. sc. 5.

‡ In a work entitled "A Briefe Discourse of the true (but neglected) use of Charact'ring the degrees by their perfection, imperfection, and diminution, in measurable musicke, against the common practice and custome of these times. Examples whereof are exprest in the harmony of 4 voyces, concerning the pleasure of 5 usuall Recreations. 1. Hunting. 2. Hawking. 3. Dauncing. 4. Drinking. 5. Enamouring. By Thomas Ravenscroft,



“ The hunt is up, the hunt is up,  
 Sing merrily wee, the hunt is up;  
 The birds they sing,  
 The deere they fling;  
 Hey nony nony-no; &c.”

The Yeoman Keepers, with their attendants, called Ragged Robins, to the number of ten or twelve, next made their appearance, leading the slow-hounds or brachets, by which the deer were roused. These men were usually dressed in Kendal green, with bugles and short hangers by their sides, and quarter-staffs in their hands, and were followed by the foresters with a number of greyhounds led in leashes for the purpose of plucking down the game.

This assemblage in the Court of the castle was soon augmented by a number of *Retainers*, or Yeomen who received a small annual pension for attendance on these occasions; they wore a livery, with the cognisance of the house to which they belonged, borne, as a badge of adherence, on their arms, and each man had a buckler on his shoulder, and a burnished broad sword hanging from his belt. Shortly afterwards appeared the pages and squires in hunting garbs on horse-back and on foot, and armed with spears and long and cross bows; and lastly the Baron, his friends, and the ladies.

Bachelor of Musicke. London, printed by Edw. Allde for Tho. Adams, 1614. Cum privilegio Regali, 4to.”

Puttenham refers to one Gray as the author of this ballad, who was in good estimation, he says, with King Henry, “ and afterwards with the Duke of Sommerset Protectour, for making certaine merry ballades, whereof one chiefly was, *The hunte it (is) up, the hunte is up.*” P. 12.

Ritson refers to another ballad, as the prototype of Shakspeare's line, which, he says, is very old, and commences thus:—

“ The hunt is up, the hunt is up,  
 And now it is almost day;  
 And he that's a bed with another man's wife,  
 It's time to get him away.”

Remarks critical and illustrative, &c., 1783, p. 183.



The company thus completed, were conducted by the huntsmen to a thicket, in which, they knew, by previous observation, that a stag had been harboured all night. Into this cover the keeper entered, leading his ban-dog (a blood-hound tied in a leam or band), and as soon as the stag abandoned it, the greyhounds were slipped upon him; these, however, after running two or three miles, he usually threw out, by again entering cover, when the slow-hounds and pricklers were sent in, to drive him from his strength. The poor animal now traverses the country for several miles, and after using every effort and manœuvre in vain, exhausted and breathless, his mouth embossed with foam, and the tears dropping from his eyes, he turns in despair upon his pursuers, and in this situation the boldest hunter of the train generally rides in, and, at some risque, dispatches him with a short hunting-sword. The *treble-mort* is then sounded, accompanied by the shouts of the men and the yelping of the dogs, and the huntsman ceremoniously presents his knife to the master of the chase, in order that he may take, as it is termed, the *say* of the deer. \*

\* Of the language formerly used by the huntsman to his dogs, a very curious description is given by Markham, in his modernised edition of the *Booke of St. Albans*, 1595.

"When the Huntsman," says he, "commeth to the kennell in the morning to couple up his hounds, and shall *jubet* once or twice to awake the dogs: opening the kennell doore, the Huntsman useth some gentle rating, lest in their hasty comming forth they should hurt one another: to which the Frenchman useth this worde, *Arere, Arere*, and we, *sost, ho ho ho ho*, once or twice redoubling the same, coupling them as they come out of the kennell. And being come into the field, and having uncoupled, the Frenchman useth, *hors de couple avant avant*, onse or twise with *soho* three times together: wee use to *jubet* once or twice to the dogges, crying, *a traile a traile, there dogges there*, and the rather to make the dogs in trailing to hold close together striking uppon some Brake crie *soho*. And if the hounds have had rest, and being over lustie, doe beginne to fling away, the Frenchmen use to crie, *swef ames swef*, redoubling the same, with *Arere ames ho*: nowe we to the same purpose use to say, *sost ho, heere againe ho*, doubling the same, sometimes calling them backe againe with a *jubet* or hallow: poynting with your hunting staffe uppon the ground, saying *soho*.

"And if some one of the hounds light upon a pure scent, so that by the manner of his eager spending you perceive it is very good, yet shall the same hounds crying, *there, now there*: and to put the rest of the crie in to him, you shall crie, *ho avant avant, list a Talbot, list list there*. To which the French man useth, *Oyes a Talbot le vailant oyes oyes, trove*



The danger which the ancient hunter incurred, on dealing the death stroke to the stag when he turned to bay, is strikingly exemplified by an incident in the life of Wilson the historian, during the time he formed a part of the household of the Earl of Essex, in the reign of Elizabeth.

“ Sir Peter Lee, of Lime, in Cheshire, invited my lord one summer, to hunt the stag. And having a great stag in chace, and many gentlemen in the pursuit, the stag took soyle. And divers, whereof I was one, alighted, and stood with swords drawne, to have a cut at him, at his coming out of the water. The staggs there, being wonderfully fierce and dangerous, made us youths more eager to be at him. But he escaped us all. And it was my misfortune to be hindered of my coming nere him, the way being sliperie, by a fall; which gave occasion to some, who did not know mee, to speak as if I had falne for feare. Which being told me, I left the stag, and followed the gentleman who first spake it. But I found him of that cold temper, that it seems his words made an escape from him; as by his denial and repentance it appeared. But this made mee

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*le coward*, in the same manner with little difference. And if you find by your hounds where a Hare hath beene at relefe, if it be in the time of greene corne, and if your hounds spend uppon the troile merily, and make a goodly crie, then shall the Huntsman blow three notes with his horne, which hee may sundry times use with discretion, when he seeth the houndes have made away: A double, and make on towards the seate: now if it be within some field or pasture where the Hare hath beene at relefe, let the Huntsman cast a ring with his houndes to finde where she hath gone out, which if the houndes light uppon, he shall crie, *There, boyes there, that tat tat, hoe hicke, hicke, hicke avant, list to him list*, and if they chance by their brain sicknesse to overshoot it, he shall call to his hounds, *ho againe ho*, doubling the same twice. And if undertaking it againe, and making it good, hee shall cheare his hounds: *there, to him there, thats he, that tat tat*, blowing a mote. And note, that this word *soho* is generally used at the view of any beast of Chase or Venerie: but indeede the word is properly *saho*, and not *soho*, but for the better pronuntiation and fulnes of the same we say, *soho* not *saho*. Now the hounds running in full chase, the Frenchman useth to say, *ho ho*, or *swef alieu douce alieu*, and wee imitating them say, *There boies, there avant there, to him there*, which termes are in deede derived from their language.” — Gentleman’s Academie, fol. 32, 33. These appear to be the terms in use at the close of the sixteenth century; for he afterwards mentions that the “olde and antient Huntsmen had divers termes” which were not in his time “very needefull.”



more violent in pursuit of the stagg, to recover my reputation. And I happened to be the only horseman in, when the dogs sett him up at bay; and approaching nere him on horsebacke, hee broke through the dogs, and run at mee, and tore my horse's side with his hornes, close by my thigh. Then I quitted my horse, and grew more cunning (for the dogs had sette him up againe), stealing behind him with my sword, and cut his hamstrings; and then got upon his back, and cut his throate." \*

A still more difficult and gallant feat, however, of this kind, was performed by John Selwyn, the under-keeper of Queen Elizabeth, who, one day, animated by the presence of his royal mistress, at a chase, in her park of Oatlands, pursued the stag with such activity, that, overtaking it, he sprung from his horse on the animal; when, after most skilfully maintaining his seat for some time, he drew his hunting-sword, and, just as he reached the green, plunged it in the throat of the stag, which immediately dropped down dead at the feet of Elizabeth; an achievement which is sculptured on his monument in Walton church, Surrey, where he is represented in the very act of killing the infuriated beast. †

The taking the *say* of, and the *breaking* up, the deer, were formerly attended with many ceremonies and superstitions. ‡ "Touching the death of a deare, or other wylde beast," says a writer of the sixteenth century, "yee knowe your selves what ceremonies they use about the same. Every poore man may cut out an oxe, or a sheepe, whereas such venison may not be dismembered but of a gentylman; who bareheaded, and set on knees, with a knife prepared properly to that use, (for every kynde of knife is not allowable) also with certain jestures, cuttes a sunder certaine partes of the wild beast, in a certain order very circumstantly. Which holy misterie, having seen the lyke yet more than a hundred tymes before.

\* Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, vol. ii. p. 464.

† *Antiquarian Repertory*, vol. i. p. 27.

‡ To take the *assay* or *say*, was to draw the knife along the belly of the deer, in order to ascertain how fat he was, and the operation was begun at the brisket.



Then (sir) whose happe it bee to eate parte of the fleshe, marye hee thinkes verily to bee made thereby halfe a gentilman." \*

After the process of dismemberment, and the selection of choice pieces, the forester, the keeper, and the hounds had their allotted share, and superstition granted even a portion to the ominous raven. "There is a little gristle," relates Turberville, "which is upon the spoone of the brisket, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it, that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it."

Of this superstitious observance Jonson has given us a pleasing sketch, in the most poetical of his works, the *Sad Shepherd* : —

" *Marian.* — He that undoes him,  
Doth cleave the brisket bone upon the spoon,  
Of which a little gristle grows — you call it —

*Robin Hood.* The raven's bone.

*Marian.* — Now o'er head sat a raven  
On a sere bough, a grown, great bird and hoarse,  
Who, all the time the deer was breaking up,  
So croaked and cried for it, as all the huntsmen,  
Especially old Scathlocke, thought it ominous !" †

In an age, when to hawke and to hunt formed the *Gentleman's Academy* ‡, the *Falconer* and the *Huntsman* were most important characters; of the former we have already given an outline from contemporary authority, and of the latter the following extract delineates a very curious picture, in which the manners, the dress, and the accoutrements are marked with singular strength and raciness of touch.

"A huntsman is the lieutenant of dogs, and foe to harvest: he is frolick in a faire morning fit for his pleasure; and alike rejoyceth

\* Chaloner's *Prayze of Follie*, 1577. The whole process of "undoing the Hart," may be seen in Markham's "*Gentlemans Academie*," fol. 35.

† Jonson apud Whalley, act i. sc. 6.

‡ Alluding to the *Book of St. Albans*, republished, under this title, in 1595, by Gervase Markham.



with the Virginians, to see the rising sun : he doth worship it as they, but worships his game more than they ; and is in some things almost as barbarous. A sluggard he contemnes, and thinks the resting time might be shortened ; which makes him rise with day, observe the same pace, and prove full as happy, if the day be happy. The names of foxe, hare, and bucke, be all attracting sillables ; sufficient to furnish fiftene meales with long discourse in the adventures of each. Foxe, drawes in his exploits done against cubbes, bitch-foxes, otters and badgers : hare, brings out his encounters, plat-formes, engines, fortifications, and night worke done against leveret, cony, wilde-cat, rabbet, weasell, and pole-cat : then bucke, the captaine of all, provokes him (not without strong passion) to remember hart, hind, stagge, doe, pricket, fawne, and fallow deere. He uses a dogged forme of government, which might bee (without shame) kept in humanity ; and yet he is unwilling to be governed with the same reason : either by being satisfied with pleasure, or content with ill fortune. Hee hath the discipline to marshall dogs, and sutablely ; when a wise herald would rather mervaile, how he could distinguish their coates, birth, and gentry. Hee carries about him in his mouth the very soule of Ovid's bodies, metamorphosed into trees, rockes and waters ; for, when he pleases, they shall eccho and distinctly answer ; and when he pleases, be extremely silent. There is little danger in him towards the common wealth ; for his worst intelligence comes from shepherds or woodmen ; and that onely threatens the destruction of hares ; a well knowne dry meate. The spring and he are still at variance ; in mockage therefore, and revenge together of that season, *he weares her livery* in winter. Little consultations please him best ; but the best directions he doth love and follow, they are his dogs. If hee cannot prevaile therefore, his lucke must be blamed, for he takes a speedy course. He cannot be less than a conquerour from the beginning, though he wants the booty ; for he pursues the flight. His manhood is *a crooked sword with a saw-backe* ; but the badge of his generous valour is a horne to give notice. Battery and blowing up, he loves not ; to undermine is his strata-



geme. His physick teaches him not to drinke sweating ; in amends whereof, he liquors himselfe to a heate, upon coole bloud, if he delights (at least) to emulate his dog in a hot nose. If a kennel of hounds passant take away his attention and company from church ; do not blame his devotion ; for in them consists the nature of it, and his knowledge. His frailties are, that he is apt to mistake any dog worth the stealing, and never take notice of the collar. He dreames of a hare sitting, a foxe earthed, or the bucke couchant : and if his fancy would be moderate, his actions might be full of pleasure.”\*

Making a natural transition from the huntsman to his hounds, we have to remark, that one great object, at this period, in the construction of the kennel, was the modulation and harmony of the vocal powers of the dog. This was carried to a nicety and perfection little practised in the present day. Gervase Markham seems to write *con amore* on this subject, and has penned directions which partake both of the picturesque, and of the melody on which he is descanting : thus, speaking of the production of *loudness of cry*, he says, “ if you would have your kennel for loudness of mouth, you shall not then choose the hollow deep mouth, but the loud clanging mouth, which spendeth freely and sharply, and as it were redoubleth in utterance : and if you mix with them the mouth that roreth, and the mouth that whineth, the cry will be both the louder and the smarter ; — and the more equally you compound these mouths, haveing as many rorers as spenders, and as many whiners, as of either of the other, the louder and pleasanter your cry will be, *especially, if it be in sounding tall woods, or under the echo of rocks ;*” and treating of the *composition* of notes in the kennel, he adds, “ you shall as nigh as you can, sort their mouths into three equal parts of musick, that is to say base, counter-tenor and mean ; the base are those mouths which are most deep and solemn, and are spent out plain and freely, without redoubling : the counter-tenor are those which are most loud and ringing, whose sharp sounds pass so swift, that they seem to dole and

\* Satyrical Essayes, &c. by John Stephens, 1615.



make division; and the mean are those which are soft sweet mouths, that though plain, and a little hollow, yet are spent smooth and freely; yet so distinctly, that a man may count the notes as they open. Of these three sorts of mouths, if your kennel be (as near as you can) equally compounded, you shall find it most perfect and delectable: for though they have not the thunder and loudness of the great dogs, which may be compared to the high wind-instruments, yet they will have the tunable sweetness of the best compounded consorts; and sure a man may find as much art and delight in a lute as in an organ." \*

Shakspeare, who frequently avails himself of the language, imagery, and circumstances attendant on this diversion, has particularly noticed, in a passage of much animation and beauty, the care taken to arrange the notes of the kennel, and the pleasure derivable from the varied intonations of the hounds. Theseus addressing Hippolyta, exclaims —

" My love shall hear the musick of my hounds! —

Uncouple in the western valley; go: —

Despatch, I say, and find the forester. —

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,

And mark the musical confusion

Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

*Hip.* ————— Never did I hear

Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,

The skies, the fountains, every region near

Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard

So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

*The.* My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,

So flew'd †, so sanded ‡; and their heads are hung

With ears that sweep away the morning dew;

Crook-knee'd, and dew-lap'd like Thessalian bulls;

Slow in pursuit, but *match'd in mouth like bells,*

*Each under each.* A cry more tuneable

Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn." §

\* Country Contentments, 1615. — 11th edit. 1683, p. 7—9.

† *Flew's*, the large chaps of a hound.

‡ *Sanded*, that is, of a sandy colour, the true denotement of a blood-hound.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 449—452, *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act iv. sc. 1.



It appears from a scene in *Timon of Athens*, and from a passage in Laneham's Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle, 1575, that it was a common thing, at this period, to hunt after dinner, or in the evening. Timon, having been employed, during the morning, in hunting, says to Alcibiades —

“ So soon as dinner's done, we'll forth again ;” \*

and Elizabeth, twice, during her residence with the Earl of Leicester, is described as pursuing this exercise in the cool of the evening. Honest Laneham's narrative of one of these royal chases will amuse the reader.

“ Munday waz hot, and thearfore her Highness kept in till a five a klok in the eevening: what time it pleazz'd her to ride foorth into the chace too hunt the Hart of fors; which foound anon, and after sore chased, and chafed by the hot pursuit of the hooundes, waz fain of fine fors at last to take soil. Thear to beholl'd the swift fleeting of the deer afore, with the stately cariage of hiz head in his swimmyng, spred (for the quantitee) lyke the sail of a ship; the hoounds harroing after, az had they bin a number of skiphs too the spoyle of a karvell; the ton no lesse eager in purchaz of his pray, than waz the other earnest in savegard of hiz life; so az the earning of the hoounds in continuauns of their crie, the swiftness of the deer, the running of footmen, the galloping of horsez, the blasting of hornz, the halloing and hewing of the huntsmen, with the excellent echoz between whilez from the woods and waters in valliez resounding; moved pastime delectabl in so hy a degree, az, for ony parson to take pleasure by moost sensez at onez, in mine opinion, thear can be none ony wey comparable to this; and special in this place, that of nature iz foormed so feet for the purpoze; in feith, *Master Martin*, if ye coold with a wish, I woold ye had bin at it: Wel, the hart waz kild, a goodly deer.” †

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. p. 60. Act ii. sc. 2.

† Nichols's Progresses of Elizabeth, vol. i. Laneham's Letter, p. 12, original edition, p. 17, 18.



So partial was Her Majesty to this diversion that even in her seventy-seventh year she still pursued it with avidity; for Rowland Whyte, one of her courtiers, writing to Sir Robert Sidney on September 12th, 1600, says, "Her majesty is well and excellently disposed to hunting, for every second day she is on horseback, and continues the sport long;" and when not disposed to incur the fatigue of joining in the chase, she was recreated with a sight of the pastime; thus at the seat of Lord Montecute, in 1591, she saw, after dinner, from a turret, "sixteen bucks all having fayre lawe, pulled downe with greyhounds in a laund or lawn." \*

Nor was James the First less passionately addicted to the sport; his journey from Scotland to England, on his accession to the throne of the latter kingdom, was frequently protracted by his inability to resist the temptation of joining in the chase; on his road to Withrington, the seat of Sir Robert Cary, after a hard ride of thirty-seven miles in less than four hours, "and by the way for a note," says a contemporary writer, "the miles according to the northern phrase, are a wey bit longer, then they be here in the south, — His Majesty having a little while reposed himselfe after his great journey, found new occasion to travell further: for, as he was delighting himselfe with the pleasure of the parke, hee suddenly beheld a number of deere neare the place: the game being so faire before him hee could not forbear, but *according to his wonted manner*, forth he went and slew two of them;" again, "After his Majesties short repast to Werslop his Majestie rides forward, but by the way in the parke he was somewhat stayed; for there appeared a number of huntes-men all in greene; the chiefe of which with a woodman's speech did welcome him, offering his Majestie to shew him some game, which he gladly condescended to see; and with a traine set he hunted a good space, very much delighted." † This diversion from his direct route is

\* Nichols's Progresses, vol. ii.

† "The true narration of the Entertainment of his Royall Majestie, from the time of his departure from Edenbrough, till his receiving at London; with all or the most special occurrences. Together with the names of those gentlemen whom his Majestie honoured with Knighthood. At London printed by Thomas Creede, for Thomas Millington, 1603. 4to.



repeatedly noticed by the same author, and proves the strong attachment of the monarch to this amusement, which he preferred to either hawking or shooting; he divided his time, says Wellwood. "betwixt his standish, his bottle, and his hunting; the last had his fair weather, the two former his dull and cloudy\*;" an assertion which with regard to hunting is corroborated by Wilson, who, recording his visit to his native dominions in 1617, informs us, that on his return he exhibited the same keen relish for the sport which he had shown in 1603: "The King, in his return from Scotland," he remarks, "made his Progress through the hunting-countries, (his hounds and hunters meeting him,) *Sherwood-Forest, Need-wood*, and all the *parks and forests* in his way, were ransacked for his *recreation*; and every night begat a new *day of delight*." † In short, James was so engrossed by his passion for hunting, that he neglected the most important business to indulge it; and even affected the garb of a hunter when he ought to have been in that of a king. Osborne calls him a *Sylvan Prince*, and adds, "I shall leave him dressed to posterity in the colours I saw him in the next Progress after his Inauguration, which was as *green* as the grass he trod on, with a *feather* in his *cap*, and a *horn* instead of a sword by his side." ‡

To these brief notices of hawking and hunting, it may be necessary to add a very few remarks on the kindred amusements of *fowling* and *fishing*, as far as they deviate, either in manner or estimation, from the practice or opinions of the present day. In the pursuit of *fowling*, indeed, there is little or no discrepancy between the two periods, if we make an exception for two instances; and these now obsolete modes of exercising the art, were termed *horse-stalking* and *bird-batting*. The former consisted originally of a horse trained for the purpose, and so mantled over with trappings as to hide the fowler completely from the game; a contrivance much improved upon for facility of usage by substituting a stuffed canvas figure, painted to

\* *Memoirs*, p. 35.

† *Wilson's History of Great Britain*, p. 106. fol. London, 1653.

‡ *Osborn's Works*, 8vo. ninth edit. 1689, p. 444.

resemble a horse grazing; this was so light that the sportsman might move it easily with one hand, and behind it he could securely take his aim; to this curious species of deception Shakspeare alludes in *As You Like It*, where the Duke, speaking of Touchstone, says, "He uses his folly like a *stalking-horse*, and under the presentation of that, he shoots his wit \*;" and again, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Claudio exclaims, "Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits." † It appears from Drayton, that the fowler shot from *underneath* his horse, where he was concealed by the mantle-cloth depending to the ground: thus in the *Polyolbion*.

"One *underneath* his horse to get a shoot doth stalk;" ‡

and in the *Muses' Elysium* —

"Then *underneath* my horse, I stalk my game to strike." §

Sometimes, instead of a stuffed canvas figure, the form of a horse painted on a cloth was carried before the sportsman: "Methinks," says a writer of this period quoted by Mr. Reed, "I behold the cunning fowler, such as I have knowne in the fenne countries and els-where, that doe shoot at woodcockes, snipes, and wilde fowle, by sneaking behind a *painted cloth* which they carry before them, having *pictured in it the shape of a horse*; which while the silly fowle gazeth on, it is knockt down with hale shot, and so put in the fowler's budget." ||

We have reason to suppose that Henry the Eighth often amused himself in this manner; for in the inventories of his wardrobes, preserved in the Harleian MS., are to be found frequent allowances

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 183. Act v. sc. 4.

† Ibid. vol. vi. p. 68.

‡ Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 368. Poly-Olbion, song xxv.

§ Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 458. Nymphal vi.

|| New Shreds of the Old Snare, by John Gee, 4to. p. 23. Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 68. note 9.



of materials for making “stalking coats, and stalking hose for the use of his majesty.”\*

Of the peculiar mode of netting called *bird-batting*, the following account has been given by a once popular authority on these subjects: — “This sport we call in England most commonly bird-batting, and some call it low-belling; and the use of it is to go with a great light of cressets, or rags of linen dipped in tallow, which will make a good light; and you must have a pan or plate made like a lanthorn, to carry your light in, which must have a great socket to hold the light, and carry it before you, on your breast, with a bell in your other hand, and of a great bigness, made in the manner of a cow-bell, but still larger; and you must ring it always after one order. If you carry the bell, you must have two companions with nets, one on each side of you; and what with the bell, and what with the light, the birds will be so amazed, that when you come near them, they will turn up their white bellies: your companions shall then lay their nets quietly upon them, and take them. But you must continue to ring the bell; for, if the sound shall cease, the other birds, if there be any more near at hand, will rise up and fly away.”† This method was used to ensnare wood-cocks, partridges, larks, &c. and it is probable that to a stratagem of this kind Shakspeare may allude, when he paints Buckingham exclaiming —

“The net has fall’n upon me; I shall perish  
Under device and practice.”‡

FISHING, as an *art*, has deviated little, in this country, from the state to which it had attained three centuries ago; but it is a subject of interest and amusement, to mark the enthusiasm with which, during the period that we are considering, and anteriorly, this delightful recreation has been discussed, and the minutiae to which its literary patrons have descended.

\* Harleian MS. 2284. † Jewel for Gentry, Lond. 1614.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 24. Henry VIII. act i. sc. 1.

Of books written on the *Art of Angling* previous to, and during the age of Shakspeare, five, independent of subsequent editions, may be enumerated; and from three of these, the most curious of their kind, we shall quote a few passages indicative of the warm attachment alluded to in the preceding paragraph. The earliest printed production on this subject is *The Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, included, for the first time, in, what may be termed, the second edition of the *Book of St. Albans*, namely, *The Treatyses perteynyng to Hawkyng, Huntynge and Fisshynge with an angle*, printed at Westminster, by Wynkyn De Worde, 1496. This little tract, which has been attributed, though perhaps not \* correctly, to Dame Juliana Berners, commences with giving a decided preference to fishing when compared with hunting, hawking, and fowling, in the course of which the author observes, that the Angler, if his sport should fail him, “atte the leest, hath his holsom walke, and mery at his ease, a swete ayre of the swete savoure of the meede floures, that makyth him hungry; he hereth the melodyous armony of fowles; he seeth the yonge swannes, heerons, duckes, cotes, and many other fowles, wyth theyr brodes; wyche me semyth better than alle the noyse of houndys, the blastes of hornys, and the scrye of fowlis, that hunters, fawkeners, and foulers can make. And if the Angler take fysshe; surely, thenne, is there noo man merier than he is in his spryte †;” and the book concludes in a singularly pleasing strain of piety and simplicity. “Ye shall not use this forsayd crafty dysporte,” says this lover of fishing, “for no

\* Mr. Haslewood, after much research, attributes to the pen of this ingenious lady only the following portions of De Worde’s edit. of 1496:

1. A small portion of the treatise on Hawking.
2. The treatise upon Hunting.
3. A short list of the beasts of chase.
4. And another short one of beasts and fowls.

The public are much indebted to this elegant antiquary for an admirable fac-simile reprint of De Worde’s rare and interesting volume.

† Burton has introduced, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, though without acknowledgment, the very words of this quotation. — Vide p. 169. 8th edit.



covetyseenes, to the encreasyng and sparynge of your money oonly; but pryncypally for your solace, and to cause the helthe of your body, and specyally of your soule: for whanne ye purpoos to goo on your dysportes in fysshynge, ye woll not desyre gretly many persons wyth you, whyche myghte lette you of your game. And thenne ye may serve God, devoutly, in sayenge affectuously youre custumable prayer; and, thus doynge, ye shall eschewe and voyde many vices."

Of this impression of the *Book of St. Albans* by De Worde, numerous editions were published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and frequently with new titles, as the "Gentleman's Academie" 1595; the "Jewell for Gentry" 1614, and the "Gentleman's Recreation" 1674. Two small tracts, however, on angling, possessing some originality, were published by Leonard Mascall, and John Taverner, the former in 1590, and the latter in \* 1600; but the most important work on the subject, after the *Treatyse on Fysshynge*, is a poem written by one John Dennys, or Davors, with the following title: *The Secrets of Angling; teaching the choicest Tooles, Baytes, and Seasons for the taking of any Fish, in Pond or River: practised and familiarly opened in three Bookes*. By J. D. Esquire. 8o. Lond. 1613. This is a production of considerable poetic merit, as will be evident from the author's eulogium on his art: after reprobating the pastimes of gaming, wantonness, and drinking, he exclaims —

\* The titles of these works are — "A Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line, and of all other Instruments thereunto belonging, made by L. M. 4o. Lond. 1590:" the 4th edit. of Mascall's Book, was reprinted in 1606 — "Certain Experiments concerning Fish and Fruit, practised by John Taverner, Gentleman, and by him published for the benefit of others." 4to. London (printed for Wm. Ponsonby) 1600. — It would appear, from a note in Walton's *Complete Angler*, that there was an impression of Taverner's book of the same date with a different title, namely, "Approved experiments touching Fish and Fruit, to be regarded by the lovers of Angling." — Vide Bagster's edit. 1808. *Life of Walton*, p. 14, note.

A third was designated "The Pleasures of Princes, or Good Men's Recreations: containing a Discourse of the general Art of Fishing with the Angle, or otherwise: and of all the hidden Secrets belonging thereunto. 4o. Lond. 1614."

“ O let me rather on the pleasant brinke  
 Of Tyne and Trent possesse some dwelling place,  
 Where I may see my quill and corke downe sinke  
 With eager bite of Barbell, Bleike, or Dace :  
 And on the world and his Creatour thinke,  
 While they proud Thais painted sheet embrace,  
 And with the fume of strong tobacco's smoke,  
 All quaffing round are ready for to choke.

Let them that list these pastimes then pursue,  
 And on their pleasing fancies feed their fill ;  
 So I the fields and meadows green may view,  
 And by the rivers fresh may walke at will,  
 Among the dazies and the violets blew :  
 Red hyacinth, and yellow daffodill,  
 Purple narcissus like the morning rayes,  
 Pale ganderglas, and azor culverkayes.

I count it better pleasure to behold  
 The goodly compasse of the lofty skie,  
 And in the midst thereof like burning gold,  
 The flaming chariot of the world's great eye ;  
 The watry clouds that in the ayre uprold,  
 With sundry kinds of painted colours flie ;  
 And faire Aurora lifting up her head,  
 All blushing rise from old Tithonus bed.

The hils and mountains raised from the plains,  
 The plains extended levell with the ground,  
 The ground divided into sundry vains,  
 The vains enclos'd with running rivers round,  
 The rivers making way through nature's chains,  
 With headlong course into the sea profound :  
 The surging sea beneath the vallies low,  
 The vallies sweet, and lakes that lovely flow.

The lofty woods, the forests wide and long  
 Adorn'd with leaves and branches fresh and green,  
 In whose cool brows the birds with chanting song  
 Do welcome with their quire the Summer's Queen,  
 The meadows fair where Flora's guifts among,  
 Are intermixt the verdant grasse between,  
 The silver skaled fish that softly swim  
 Within the brooks and crystall watry brim.



All these and many more of his creation,  
 That made the heavens, the Angler oft doth see,  
 And takes therein no little delectation  
 To thinke how strange and wonderfull they bee,  
 Framing thereof an inward contemplation,  
 To set his thoughts on other fancies free :  
 And whiles he looks on these with joyfull eye,  
 His minde is wrapt above the starry skie.” \*

The poet has entered so minutely into his task, as to give directions for the colour of the angler's cloaths, which he wishes should be russet or gray †; and he opens his third book with a descriptive catalogue of the moral virtues and qualities of mind necessary to a lover of the pastime; these, he informs us, are twelve, namely, *faith, hope, charity, patience, humility, courage, liberality, knowledge, placability, piety, temperance, and memory*; an enumeration sufficiently extensive, it might be supposed, to damp the enthusiasm of the most eager disciple; yet has Gervase Markham, notwithstanding, wonderfully augmented the list. This indefatigable author, in an early edition of his *Country Contentments* ‡, converted the poetry of Davors into prose, with the following title: “The whole Art of Angling; as it was written in a small Treatise in Rime, and now for the

\* This beautiful encomium has been quoted in Walton's *Complete Angler*, with many alterations, and some of them much for the worse; for instance, the very opening of the quotation is thus given:—

“ Let me live harmlessly; and near the brink  
 Of Trent or Avon *have* a dwelling-place —

and the conclusion of the fourth stanza:—

“ The raging sea, beneath the vallies low,  
 Where lakes, and rills, and rivulets *do* flow.”

Bagster's edit. p. 123.

† Gervase Markham, in his *Art of Angling*, not only recommends the same colours, but adds a caution which marks the rural dress of the day: “Let your apparel,” says he, “be close to your body, without any *new fashioned flashes, or hanging sleeves, waving loose, like sails about you.*” P. 59.

‡ The first edition of the *Country Contentments*, 1615, does not possess the *Art of Angling*; it probably appeared in the second, a year or two after; for the work was so popular that it rapidly ran through several impressions: the fifth is dated 1633.

better understanding of the Reader put into prose, and *adorned* and *enlarged*." The additions are numerous and entertaining, a specimen of which, under the marginal notation of *Angler's virtues*, will convey a distinct and curious idea of the estimation in which this art was held in the reign of James the First, and of the moral and mental qualifications deemed essential, at this period, towards its successful attainment.

"Now for the inward qualities of mind, albeit some writers reduce them to *twelve* heads, which, indeed, whosoever enjoyeth, cannot chuse but be very compleat in much perfection, yet I must draw them into many other branches. The first and most especial whereof is, that a skilful Angler ought to be a general scholler, and seen in all the liberal sciences, as a grammarian, to know how either to write or discourse of his art in true and fitting terms, either without affectation or rudeness. He should have sweetness of speech, to persuade and intice others to delight in an exercise so much laudable. He should have strength of arguments to defend and maintain his profession, against envy or slander. He should have knowledge in the sun, moon, and stars, that by their aspects he may guess the seasonableness or unseasonableness of the weather, the breeding of storms, and from what coasts the winds are ever delivered. He should be a good knower of countries, and well used to highwayes, that by taking the readiest paths to every lake, brook, or river, his journies may be more certain, and less wearisome. He should have knowledge in proportions of all sorts, whether circular, square, or diametrical, that when he shall be questioned of his diurnal progresses, he may give a geographical description of the angles and channels of rivers, how they fall from their heads, and what compasses they fetch in their several windings. He must also have the perfect art of numbring, that in the sounding of lakes or rivers, he may know how many foot or inches each severally containeth; and by adding, substracting, or multiplying the same, he may yield the reason of every river's swift or slow current. He should not be unskilful in musick, that whensoever either melancholy, heaviness of his thoughts, or the perturbations of



his own fancies, stirreth up sadness in him, he may remove the same with some godly hymn or anthem, of which *David* gives him ample examples.

“ He must be of a well settled and constant belief, to enjoy the benefit of his expectation ; for then to despair, it were better never to be put in practice : and he must ever think where the waters are pleasant, and any thing likely, that there the Creator of all good things hath stored up much of plenty, and though your satisfaction be not as ready as your wishes, yet you must hope still, that with perseverance you shall reap the fulness of your harvest with contentment : Then he must be full of love both to his pleasure and to his neighbour : to his pleasure, which otherwise will be irksome and tedious, and to his neighbour, that he neither give offence in any particular, nor be guilty of any general destruction : then he must be exceeding patient, and neither vex nor excruciate himself with losses or mischances, as in losing the prey when it is almost in the hand, or by breaking his tools by ignorance or negligence, but with pleased sufferance amend errors, and think mischances instructions to better carefulness.

“ He must then be full of humble thoughts, not disdaining when occasion commands to kneel, lye down, or wet his feet or fingers, as oft as there is any advantage given thereby, unto the gaining the end of his labour. Then must he be strong and valiant, neither to be amazed with storms, nor affrighted with thunder, but hold them according to their natural causes, and the pleasure of the highest : neither must he, like the fox which preyeth upon lambs, employ all his labour against the smaller frey ; but like the lyon that seizeth elephants, think the greatest fish which swimmeth, a reward little enough for the pains which he endureth. Then must he be liberal, and not working only for his own belly, as if it could never be satisfied ; but he must with much cheerfulness bestow the fruits of his skill amongst his honest neighbours, who being partners of his gain, will doubly renown his triumph, and that is ever a pleasing reward to vertue.

“Then must he be prudent, that apprehending the reasons why the fish will not bite, and all other casual impediments which hinder his sport, and knowing the remedies for the same, he may direct his labours to be without troublesomeness.

“Then he must have a moderate contention of the mind to be satisfied with indifferent things, and not out of any avaritious greediness think every thing too little, be it never so abundant.

“Then must he be of a thankful nature, praising the author of all goodness, and shewing a large gratefulness for the least satisfaction.

“Then must he be of a perfect memory, quick and prompt to call into his mind all the needfull things which are any way in this exercise to be employed, lest by omission or by forgetfulness of any, he frustrate his hopes, and make his labour effectless. Lastly, he must be of a strong constitution of body, able to endure much fasting, and not of a gnawing stomach, observing hours, in which if it be unsatisfied, it troubleth both the mind and body, and loseth that delight which maketh the pastime only pleasing.”\*

It is impossible to read this elaborate catalogue of qualifications without a smile; for who would suppose that *grammar*, *rhetoric* and *logic*, *astronomy*, *geography*, *arithmetic* and *music*, were necessary to form an angler: yet we must allow, indeed, even in the present times, that *hope*, *patience*, and *contentment* are still articles of indispensable use to him who would catch fish; for though, as Shakspeare justly observes,

“The *pleasant'st angling* is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait,”†

yet are we so frequently disappointed of this latter spectacle, that the art may be truly considered as a school for the temper, and as meriting the rational encomium of Sir Henry Wotton, a dear lover of the

\* *Countrey Contentments*, 11th edit. p. 59—62.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 78. *Much Ado about Nothing*, act iii. sc. 1.



angle in the days of Shakspeare, and who has declared that, after tedious study, angling was "a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness\*, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness;" and "that it begat habits of peace and patience in those that professed and practised it." "Indeed, my friend," adds the amiable Walton, "you will find angling to be like the virtue of humility; which has a calmness of spirit, and a world of other blessings, attending upon it." †

A rural diversion of a kind very opposite to that of angling, namely, HORSE-RACING, may be considered, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, if we compare it with the state to which the rage for gambling has since carried it, as still in its infancy. It was classed, indeed, with hawking and hunting, as a liberal pastime, and almost generally pursued for the mere purposes of exercise or pleasure; hence the moral satirists of the age, the Puritans of the sixteenth century, have recommended it as a substitute for cards and dice. That it was, however, even at this period, occasionally practised in the spirit of the modern turf, will be evident from the authority of Shakspeare, who says,

————— "I have heard of *riding wagers*,  
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands  
That run i'the clock's behalf;" ‡

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\* To this effect, likewise, Col. Venables gives a decided testimony; for in the preface to his "Experienc'd Angler," first published in 1662, he declares, "if example (which is the best proof) may sway any thing, I know no sort of men less subject to melancholy than anglers, many have cast off other recreations and embraced it, but I never knew any angler wholly cast off (though occasions might interrupt) their affections to their beloved recreation;" and he adds, "if this art may prove a noble brave rest to my mind, 'tis all the satisfaction I covet."

† Walton's *Complete Angler* apud Bagster, p. 122. — "Let me take this opportunity," says Mr. Bowles, "of recommending the amiable and venerable Isaac Walton's *Complete Angler*; a work the most singular of its kind, breathing the very spirit of contentment, of quiet, and unaffected philanthropy, and interspersed with some beautiful relics of poetry, old songs, and ballads." Bowles's *Pope*, vol. i. p. 135.

‡ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xviii. p. 512. *Cymbeline*, act iii. sc. 2.

and Burton, who wrote at the close of the Shakspearean era, mentions the ruinous consequences of this innovation: "Horse-races," he observes, "are desports of great men, and good in themselves, though many gentlemen by such means gallop quite out of their fortunes."\*

To encourage, however, a spirit of emulation, prizes were established for the swiftest horses, and these were usually either silver bells or silver cups; from the prevalence of the former, the common term for horse-races in the time of James I. was *bell-courses*, an amusement which became very frequent in the reign of this prince, and, though the value of the prize did not amount to more than eight or ten pounds, and the riders were for the most part the owners of the horses, attracted a numerous concourse of spectators.

The estimation in which the breed of *race-horses* was held, even in the age of Elizabeth, may be drawn from a passage in one of the satires of Bishop Hall, first published in 1597:—

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"Dost thou prize  
Thy brute beasts worth by their dam's qualities?  
Say'st thou this colt shall prove a swift pac'd steed,  
Onely because a Jennet did him breed?  
Or say'st thou this same horse shall win the prize,  
Because his dam was swiftest Trunchifce  
Or Runceval his syre; himself a galloway?  
While like a tireling jade, he lags half way." †

While on this subject, we may remark, that the *Art of Riding* was, during the era we are contemplating, carried to a state of great perfection;

"To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,  
And witch the world with noble horsemanship," ‡

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\* *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 170. part ii. sat. 2. Mem. iv.

† *Chalmers's English Poets*, vol. v. p. 275. book iv. satire 3.

‡ *Reed's Shakspeare*, vol. xi. p. 381. Henry IV. part i. act iv. sc. 1.



was the pursuit of every eager and aspiring spirit, and various treatises were written to facilitate the attainment of an accomplishment at once so useful and so fashionable. Among these, the pieces of Gervase Markham may be deemed the best ; indeed, his earliest work on the subject, which is dated 1593, claims to be the first ever written in this country on the art of training *Running-horses* \*; and is supposed also to be the first production of Markham : it went through many impressions under various titles, and from one of these termed *Cavelarice*, printed in 1607, I shall select a minutely curious picture of the "horseman's apparel."

"First, when you begin to learne to ride, you must come to the stable, in such decent and fit apparel, as is meet for such an exercise, that is to say, a hat which must sit close and firme upon your heade, with an indifferent narrow verge or brim, so that in the saults or bounds of the horse, it may neither through widenesse or unweldinesse fall from your head, nor with the bredth of the brim fall into your eies, and impeach your sight, both which are verie grosse errors: About your neck you shall weare a falling band, and no ruffe, whose depth or thicknesse, may, either with the winde, or motions of your horse, ruffell about your face ; or, according to the fashion of the Spaniards, daunce hobby-horse-like about your shoulders, which though in them is taken for a grace, yet in true judgment it is found an errour. Your doublet shal be made close and hansome to your bodie, large wasted, so that you may ever be sure to ride with your points trussed (for to ride otherwise is most vilde) and in all parts so easye, that it may not take from you the use of anie part of your

\* The title is as follows: "A Discourse of Horsemanshippe: wherein the breeding and ryding of Horses for service, in a breefe manner is more methodically sette downe then hath been heretofore, &c. Also the manner to chuse, trayne, ryde and dyet, both Hunting-horses and *Running-horses*: with all the secretes thereto belonging discovered. *An arte never hearetofore written by any authour.* Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chiegio." At London. Printed by John Charlewood for Richard Smith, 1593, 4to. Dedicated "To the Right Worshipfull, and his singular good father, Ma. Rob. Markham, of Cotham, in the County of Nottingham, Esq. by Jervis Markham. Licensed 29 January, 1592-3." Vide Herbert, v. 2. 1102.

bodie. About your waste you must have ever your girdle and thereon a smal dagger or punniard, which must be so fast in the sheath that no motion of the horse may cast it forth, and yet so readie, that upon any occasion you may draw it. Your hose would be large, rounde, and full, so that they may fill your saddle, which should it otherwise be emptie and your bodie looke like a small substance in a great compasse, it were wondrous uncomely. Your bootes must be cleane, blacke, long, and close to your legge, comming almost up to your middle thigh, so that they may lie as a defence betwixt your knee and the tree of your saddle. Your boote-hose must come some two inches higher then your bootes, being hansomely tied up with pointes. Your spurres must be strong and flat inward, bending with a compasse under your ancle: the neck of your spurre must be long and straight, and rowels thereof longe and sharp, the prickes thereof not standing thicke together, nor being above five in number. Upon your handes you must weare a handsome paire of gloves, and in your right hande you must have a long rodde finely rush-growne, so that the small ende thereof be hardly so great as a round packe-thread, insomuch that when you move or shake it, the noyse thereof may be lowde and sharpe." \*

Having thus noticed the *great rural* diversions of this period, as far as they deviate from modern practice, the remainder of the chapter will be occupied by such minor amusements of the country as may now justly be considered obsolete; for it must be recollected, that to enumerate only what is *peculiar* to the era under consideration, forms the object of our research. It should, likewise, here be added, that those amusements which are *equally common* to both country and town, will find their place under the latter head, such as cards, dice, the practice of archery, baiting, &c. &c.

Among the amusements generally prevalent in the country, Burton has included the *Quintaine*. This was originally a mere martial

\* Cavelarice, or the arte and knowledge belonging to the Horse-ryder, 1607. Book ii. chap. 24.



sport ; and, as Vegetius informs us, familiar to the Romans, from an individual of which nation, named *Quintus*, it is supposed to have derived its etymology. During the early feudal ages of modern Europe it continued to support its military character, was practised by the higher orders of society, and preceded, and probably gave origin to, tilting, justs, and tournaments. These, however, as more elegant and splendid in their costume, gradually superseded it during the prevalence of chivalry ; it then became an exercise for the middle ranks, for burgesses and citizens, and at length towards the close of the sixteenth century, degenerated into a mere rustic sport.

It would appear, from comparing Stowe with Shakspeare, that about the year 1600, the Quintain was made use of under two forms ; the most simple consisting of a post fixed perpendicularly in the ground, on the top of which was a cross-bar turning upon a pivot or spindle, with a broad board nailed at one end and a bag of sand suspended at the other ; at the board they ran on horseback with spears or staves, and “ hee,” says Stowe, “ that hit not the broad end of the quinten was of all men laughed to scorne ; and hee that hit it full, if he rid not the faster, had a sound blow in his necke with a bagge full of sand hanged on the other end.”\* A more costly and elaborate machine, resembling the human form, is alluded to by Shakspeare in *As You Like It*, where Orlando says,

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“ My better parts  
Are all thrown down ; and *that which here stands up*,  
*Is but a quintain*, a mere lifeless block.” †

In Italy, Germany, and Flanders, a quintain, carved in wood in imitation of the human form, was, during the sixteenth century, in common use. ‡ The figure very generally represented a Saracen, armed with a shield in one hand, and a sword in the other, and, being

\* Survey of London, 4to. 1618, p. 145. † Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 29.

‡ Vide Pluvinel sur l'exercice de monter a cheval, part iii. p. 177. et Traite des Tournois, Joustes, &c. par Claude Fran. Menestrier, p. 264.

placed on a pivot, the skill of those who attacked it, depended on shivering the lance to pieces between the eyes of the figure; for if the weapon deviated to the right or left, and especially if it struck the shield, the quintain turned round with such velocity as to give the horseman a violent blow on the back with his sword, a circumstance which covered the performer with ridicule, and excited the mirth of the spectators. That such a machine, termed the *shield quintain*, was used in Ireland during the reign of Richard the Second, we have the authority of Froissart; it is therefore highly probable, that this species of the diversion was as common in England, and still lingered here in the reign of Elizabeth; and that to a quintain of this kind, representing an armed man, and erected for the purpose of a *military* exercise, Shakspeare alludes in the passage just quoted.

It must, however, be allowed, that at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and for several years anterior, the quintain had almost universally become the plaything of the peasantry, and was seldom met with but at rural weddings, wakes, or fairs; or under any other form than that which Stowe has described. No greater proof of this can be given than the fact, that when Elizabeth was entertained at Kenelworth Castle, in 1575, with an exact representation of a *Country Bridale*, a quintain of this construction formed a part of it. "Marvellous," says Laneham, "were the martial acts that were done there that day; the bride-groom for pre-eminence had the first course at the Quintaine, brake his spear treshardiment; but his mare in his manage did a little so titubate, that much ado had his manhood to sit in his saddle, and to scape the foil of a fall: With the help of his hand, yet he recovered himself, and lost not his stirrups (for he had none to his saddle); had no hurt as it hapt, but only that his girth burst, and lost his pen and inkhorn that he was ready to weep for; but his handkerchief, as good hap was, found he safe at his girdle; that cheered him somewhat, and had good regard it should not be filed. For though heat and coolness upon sundry occasions made him sometime to sweat, and sometime rheumatic; yet durst he be bolder to blow his nose and wipe his face with the flappet of his father's jacket, than with



his mother's muffler : 'tis a goodly matter, when youth is mannerly brought up, in fatherly love and motherly awe.

" Now, Sir, after the bride-groom had made his course, ran the rest of the band a while, in some order ; but soon after, tag and rag, cut and long tail ; where the specialty of the sport was to see how some for his slackness had a good bob with the bag ; and some for his haste to topple down right, and come tumbling to the post : Some striving so much at the first setting out, that it seemed a question between the man and the beast, whether the course should be made a horseback or a foot : and put forth with the spurs, then would run his race by us among the thickest of the throng, that down came they together hand over head : Another, while he directed his course to the quintain, his jument would carry him to a mare among the people ; so his horse as amorous as himself adventurous : An other, too, run and miss the quintain with his staff, and hit the board with his head !

" Many such gay games were there among these riders : who by and by after, upon a greater courage, left their quintaining, and ran one at another. There to see the stern countenances, the grim looks, the couragious attempts, the desperate adventures, the dangerous courses, the fierce encounters, whereby the buff at the man, and the counterbuff at the horse, that both sometime came toppling to the ground. By my troth, *Master Martin*, 'twas a lively pastime ; I believe it would have moved some man to a right merry mood, though it had been told him his wife lay a dying." \*

This passage presents us with a lively picture of what the *rural quintain* was in the days of Elizabeth, an exercise which continued to amuse our rustic forefathers for more than a century after the princely festival of Kenelworth. Minshieu, who published his Dictionary in 1617, the year subsequent to Shakspeare's death, informs us that " A *quintaine* or *quintelle*," was " a game in request at marriages, when Jac and Tom, Dic, Hob and Will, strive for the

\* Nichols's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. and of Laneham's Letter, p. 30—32.

gay garland." Randolph in 1642, alluding in one of his poems to the diversions of the Spaniards, says

" Foot-ball with us may be with them balloone ;  
As they at *tilts*, so we at *quintaine* runne ;  
And those old pastimes relish best with me,  
That have least art, and most simplicitie ;"

Plott in his History of Oxfordshire, first printed in 1677, mentions the Quintain as the common bridal diversion of the peasantry at Deddington in that county ; " it is now," he remarks, " only in request at marriages, and set up in the way for young men to ride at as they carry home the bride, he that breaks the board being counted the best man \* ;" and in a satire published about the year 1690, under the title of *The Essex Champion ; or the famous History of Sir Billy of Billerecay, and his Squire Ricardo*, intended as a ridicule, after the manner of Cervantes, on the romances then in circulation, the hero, Sir Billy, is represented as running at a quintain, such as Stowe has drawn in his Survey, but with the most unfortunate issue, for " taking his launce in his hand, he rid with all his might at the Quinten, and hitting the board a full blow, brought the sand-bag about with such force, as made him measure his length on the ground." †

Most of the numerous athletic diversions of the country remaining what they were two centuries ago, cannot, in accordance with our plan, require any comment or detail ; two, however, now, we believe, entirely obsolete, and which serve to mark the manners of the age, it will be necessary to introduce. Mercutio, in a contest of peasantry and banter with Romeo, exclaims, " Nay, if thy wits run the *wild-geese chace*, I have done." ‡

This barbarous species of horse-race, which has been named from its resemblance to the flight of *wild-geese*, was a common diversion

\* Natural Hist. of Oxfordshire, p. 200.

† Censura Literaria, vol. viii. p. 233, 234.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 111. Act ii. sc. 4.



among the country-gentlemen of this period ; Burton, indeed, calls it one of “ the disports of great men\* ;” a confession which does no honour to the age, for this elegant amusement consisted in two horses starting together, and he who proved the hindmost rider was obliged to follow the foremost over whatever ground he chose to carry him, that horse which could distance the other winning the race.

Another sport still more extraordinary and rude, and much in vogue in the south-western counties, was, one of the numerous games with the ball, and termed HURLING. Of this there were two kinds, *hurling to the Goales* and *hurling to the Country*, and both have been described with great accuracy by Carew, in his Survey of Cornwall. The first is little more than a species of hand-ball, but the second, when represented as the amusement of *gentlemen*, furnishes a curious picture of the civilisation of the times.

“ In *hurling to the country*,” says Carew, “ two or three, or more parishes agree to hurl against two or three other parishes. The matches are usually made by *gentlemen*, and their goales are either those gentlemen’s houses, or some towns or villages three or four miles asunder, of which either side maketh choice after the nearnesse of their dwellings ; when they meet, there is neyther comparing of numbers nor matching of men, but a silver ball is cast up, and that company which can catch and carry it by force or slight to the place assigned, gaineth the ball and the victory. — Such as see where the ball is played give notice, crying ‘ ware east,’ ‘ ware west,’ as the same is carried. The hurlers take their next way over hilles, dales, hedges, ditches ; yea, and thorow bushes, briars, mires, plashes, and rivers whatsoever, so as you shall sometimes see twenty or thirty lie tugging together in the water scrambling and scratching for the ball.” †

The domestic amusements in the country being nearly, if not altogether, the same with those which prevailed in the city, we shall, with

\* Anatomy of Melancholy, 8th edit. p. 170.

† Carew’s Survey of Cornwall, 1602, book i. p. 74.

one exception, refer the consideration of them to another part of this work. The pastime for which this distinction is claimed, was known by the name of SHOVEL-BOARD, or *Shuffle-board*, and was so universally prevalent throughout the kingdom, during the era of which we are treating, that there could scarcely be found a nobleman's or gentleman's house in the country in which this piece of furniture was not a conspicuous object. The great hall was the place usually assigned for its station, though in some places, as, for instance, at Ludlow Castle, a room was appropriated to this purpose, called *The Shovell-Board Room*. \*

The table necessary for this game, now superseded by the use of Billiards, was frequently upon a very large and expensive scale. "It is remarkable," observes Dr. Plott, "that in the hall at Chartley the shuffle-board table, though ten yards one foot and an inch long, is made up of about two hundred and sixty pieces, which are generally about eighteen inches long, some few only excepted, that are scarce a foot; which, being laid on longer boards for support underneath, are so accurately joined and glewed together, that no shuffle-board whatever is freer from rubbs or casting. — There is a joynt also in the shuffle-board at Madeley Manor exquisitely well done." †

The mode of playing at Shovel-board is thus described by Mr. Strutt:—"At one end of the shovel-board there is a line drawn across, parallel with the edge, and about three or four inches from it; at four feet distance from this line another is made, over which it is necessary for the weight to pass when it is thrown by the player, otherwise the go is not reckoned. The players stand at the end of the table, opposite to the two marks above mentioned, each of them having four flat weights of metal, which they shove from them, one at a time, alternately: and the judgment of the play is, to give sufficient impetus to the weight to carry it beyond the mark nearest to the edge of the board, which requires great nicety, for if it be too

\* Vide Todd's Milton, 2d. edit. vol. vi. p. 192.

† Natural History of Staffordshire, p. 388.



strongly impelled, so as to fall from the table, and there is nothing to prevent it, into a trough placed underneath for its reception, the throw is not counted; if it hangs over the edge, without falling, three are reckoned towards the player's game; if it lie between the line and the edge, without hanging over, it tells for two; if on the line, and not up to it, but over the first line, it counts for one. The game, when two play, is generally eleven; but the number is extended when four, or more, are jointly concerned." \*

It appears from a passage in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, that, in Shakspeare's time, the broad shillings of Edward VI. were made use of at shovel-board instead of the more modern weights. Falstaff is enquiring of Pistol if he picked master Slender's purse, a query to which Slender thus replies: "Ay, by these gloves, did he, (or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else,) of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two *Edward shovel-boards*, that cost me two shillings and two pence a-piece of Yead Miller, by these gloves." † "That Slender means the broad shilling of one of our kings," remarks Mr. Malone, "appears from comparing these words with the corresponding passage in the old quarto: 'Ay by this handkerchief did he; — two faire shovel-board *shillings*, besides seven groats in mill-sixpences.'" ‡

Mr. Douce is of opinion that the game of shovel-board is not much older than the reign of Edward VI., and that it is only a variation, on a larger scale, of what was term'd SHOVE-GROAT, a game invented in the reign of Henry VIII., and described in the statutes, of his 33d year, as a *new* game. § Shove-groat was also played, as the name implies, with the coin of the age, namely silver groats, then as large as our modern shillings, and to this pastime and to the instrument used in performing it, Shakspeare likewise, and Jonson, allude; the first in the *Second Part of King Henry IV.*, where Falstaff, threatening

\* Sports and Pastimes, p. 264.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 22.

‡ Ibid. vol. v. p. 23. note 2.

§ Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 454; 455.

Pistol, exclaims, "Quoit him down, Bardolph, like a *Shove-groat shilling*:" \* the second in *Every Man in his Humour*, where Knowell, speaking of Brain-worm, says that he has "translated begging out of the old hackney pace, to a fine easy amble, and made it run as smooth off the tongue as a *shove-groat shilling*." † That the game of *Shovel-board* is subsequent, in point of time, to the diversion of *Shove-groat*, is probable from the circumstance noticed by Mr. Douce, that no coin termed *shovel-groat* is any where to be found, and consequently the era of the broad shilling may be deemed that also of shovel-board. Mr. Strutt supposes the modern game of *Justice Jervis* to resemble, in all essential points, the ancient *Shove-groat*. ‡

Between the *juvenile* sports which were common in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and those of the present day, little variation or discrepancy, worth noticing, can be perceived; they were, under slight occasional alterations of form and name, equally numerous, trifling, or mischievous, and Shakspeare has now and then referred to them, for the purposes of illustration or similitude; he has, in this manner, alluded to the well-known games of *leap-frog* §; *handy-dandy* ||; *wildmare*, or *balancing* ¶; *flap-dragons* <sup>1</sup>; *loggats*, or *kittle-pins* <sup>2</sup>; *country-base*, or *prisoner's bars* <sup>3</sup>; *fast and loose* <sup>4</sup>; *nine men's morris*, or *five-penny morris* <sup>5</sup>; *cat in a bottle* <sup>6</sup>; *figure of eight* <sup>7</sup>, &c. &c.; games which, together with those derived from balls, marbles, hoops, &c. require no description, and which, deviating little in their progress from age to age, can throw no material light on the costume of early life. Very few diversions, indeed, peculiar to our

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 96.

† Whalley's Works of Ben Jonson, vol. i.

‡ Vide Sports and Pastimes, p. 267. edit. of 1810.

§ Henry V., act v. sc. 2.

|| Lear, act iv. sc. 6.

¶ Second Part of Henry IV., act ii. sc. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Love's Labour Lost, act v. sc. 1. and Second Part of Henry IV., act ii. sc. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Hamlet, act v. sc. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cymbeline, act v. sc. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony and Cleopatra, act iv. sc. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Midsummer-Night's Dream, act ii. sc. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Much Ado about Nothing, act i. sc. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Midsummer-Night's Dream, act ii. sc. 2.



youthful days have become totally obsolete ; among these, however, may be mentioned one, which, from the obscurity resting on it, its peculiarity, and former popularity, is entitled to some distinction. We allude to the diversion of BARLEY-BREAKE, of the mode of playing which, Mr. Strutt confesses himself ignorant, and merely quotes the following lines from Sidney, as given by Johnson in his Dictionary :

“ By neighbours prais'd, she went abroad thereby,  
At *barley-brake* her sweet swift feet to try.” \*

Barley-breake was, however, among young people, one of the most popular amusements of the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, and continued so until the austere zeal of the Puritans occasioned its suppression : thus Thomas Randall, in “ An Eclogue ” on the diversions of Cotswold Hills, complains that

“ Some melancholy swaines, about have gone,  
To teach all zeale, their owne complection —  
These teach that dauncing is a Jezabell,  
And *Barley-breake*, the ready way to hell.” †

Before this puritanical revolution took place, *barley-breake* was a common theme with the amatory bards of the day, and allusions to it were frequent in their songs, madrigals, and ballets. With one of these, written about 1600, we shall present the reader, as a pleasing specimen of the light poetry of the age :—

“ Now is the month of maying,  
When merry lads are playing;  
Each with his bonny lasse,  
Upon the greeny grasse.

The spring clad all in gladnesse  
Doth laugh at winter's sadnesse ;  
And to the bagpipe's sound,  
The nymphs tread out their ground.

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\* Sports and Pastimes, p. 338.

† Annalia Dubrensis, 1636, c. iii.

Fye then, why sit wee musing,  
 Youth's sweet delight refusing;  
 Say daintie Nymphs and speake,  
 Shall wee play *barly-breake*.\*

There were two modes of playing at barley-breake, and of these one was rather more complex than the other. Mr. Gifford, in a note on the *Virgin-Martyr* of Massinger, where this game, in its more elaborate form, is referred to, remarks, that "with respect to the amusement of barley-break, allusions to it occur repeatedly in our old writers; and their commentators have piled one parallel passage upon another, without advancing a single step towards explaining what this celebrated pastime really was. It was played by six people (three of each sex), who were coupled by lot. A piece of ground was then chosen, and divided into three compartments, of which the middle one was called hell. It was the object of the couple condemned to this division, to catch the others, who advanced from the two extremities; in which case a change of situation took place, and hell was filled by the couple who were excluded by pre-occupation, from the other places. In this "catching," however, there was some difficulty, as, by the regulations of the game, the middle couple were not to separate before they had succeeded, while the others might break hands whenever they found themselves hard pressed. When all had been taken in turn, the last couple was said *to be in hell*, and the game ended." †

That this description, explanatory of the passage in Massinger,

"He is at *barley-break*, and the last couple  
 Are now in hell,"

is accurate and full, will derive corroboration from a scarce pamphlet entitled "*Barley-breake, or a Warning for Wantons*," published in 1607, and which contains a curious representation of this amusement.

\* Cantus of Thomas Morley, the first booke of ballets to five voyces.

† Massinger's Works, by Gifford, vol. i. p. 104.



——— “ On a time the lads and lasses came,  
Entreating Elpin that she \* might goe play;  
He said she should (Euphema was her name)  
And then denyes: yet needs she must away.

To Barley-breake they roundly then 'gan fall,  
Raimon, Euphema had unto his mate;  
For by a lot he won her from them all;  
Wherefore young Streton doth his fortune hate.

But yet ere long he ran and caught her out,  
And on the back a gentle fall he gave her;  
It is a fault which jealous eyes spie out,  
A maide to kisse before her jealous father.

Old Elpin smiles, but yet he frets within,  
Euphema saith, she was unjustly cast.  
She strives, he holds, his hand goes out and in;  
She cries, away! and yet she holds him fast.

Till sentence given by an other maid,  
That she was caught according to the law;  
The voice whereof this civill quarrell staid,  
And to his mate each lusty lad 'gan draw.

Euphema now with Streton is in hell,  
(For so the middle roome is alwaies cald)  
He would for ever, if he might, there dwell;  
He holds it blisse with her to be intrald.

The other run, and in their running change;  
Streton 'gan catch, and then let goe his hold;  
Euphema like a doe, doth swiftly range,  
Yet taketh none, although full well she could,

And winkes on Streton, he on her 'gan smile,  
And faine would whisper something in her eare;  
She knew his mind, and bid him use a wile,  
As she ran by him, so that none did heare.” †

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\* His daughter.

† “ Barley-breake, or a Warning for Wantons. Written by W. N., Gent. Printed at London by Simon Stafford, dwelling in the Cloth-fayre, neere the Red Lyon, 1607. 4to. 16 leaves.” Vide British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 65. — This poem has been attributed, notwithstanding the initials, to Nicholas Breton.

The simpler mode of conducting this pastime, as it was practised in Scotland, has been detailed by Dr. Jamieson, who tells us, that it was "a game generally played by young people in a corn-yard. One stack is fixed on as the *dule*, or goal; and one person is appointed to catch the rest of the company, who run out from the dule. He does not leave it till they are all out of his sight. Then he sets off to catch them. Any one who is taken cannot run out again with his former associates, being accounted a prisoner; but is obliged to assist his captor in pursuing the rest. When all are taken, the game is finished; and he who was first taken is bound to act as catcher in the next game." \* It is evident, from our old poetry, that this style of playing at barley-breake was also common in England, and especially among the lower orders in the country.

It may be proper to add, at the close of this chapter, that a species of public diversion was, during the Elizabethan period, supported by each parish, for the purpose of innocently employing the peasantry upon a failure of work from weather or other causes. To this singular though laudable custom Shakspeare alludes in the *Twelfth Night*, where Sir Toby says, "He's a coward, and a coystil, that will not drink to my niece, 'till his brains turn o' the toe like a † *parish-top*." "This," says Mr. Steevens, "is one of the customs now laid aside;" and he adds, in explanation, that "a large top was kept in every village, to be whipped in frosty weather, that the peasants might be kept warm by exercise, and out of mischief, while they could not work;" a diversion to which Fletcher likewise refers in his *Night-Walker*, and which has given rise to the proverbial expression of *sleeping like a town-top*.

From this rapid sketch of the diversions of the country, as they existed in Shakspeare's time, it will be immediately perceived that not many have become obsolete, and of those which have undergone some change, the variations have not been such as materially to

\* Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language, 1808.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 248.



obscure their origin or previous constitution. The object of this chapter being, therefore, only to mark what was peculiar in rural pastime to the age under consideration, and not to notice what had suffered little or no modification, its articles, especially if we consider the nature of the immediately preceding section, (and that nearly all amusements common to both town and country were referred to a future part,) could not be either very numerous, or require any very extended elucidation.

What might be necessary in the minute and isolated task of the commentator, would be tedious and superfluous in a design which professes, while it gives a distinct and broad outline of the complexion of the times, to preserve among its parts an unrelaxed attention to unity and compression.

## CHAPTER IX.

VIEW OF COUNTRY LIFE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE, CONTINUED — AN ACCOUNT OF  
SOME OF ITS SUPERSTITIONS.

THE popular creed, during the age of Shakspeare, was perhaps more extended and systematised than in any preceding or subsequent period of our history. For this effect we are indebted, in a great measure, to the credulity and superstition of James the First, the publication of whose Demonology rendered a profession in the belief of sorcery and witchcraft a matter of fashion and even of interest; for a ready way to the favour of this monarch was an implicit assumption of his opinions, theological and metaphysical, as well as political.

It must not be inferred, however, that at the commencement of the seventeenth century, the human mind was unwilling or unprepared to shake off the load which had oppressed it for ages. Among the enlightened classes of society, now rapidly extending throughout the kingdom, the reception of these doctrines was rather the effect of court example than of settled conviction; but as the vernacular bards, and especially the dramatic, who ever hold unbounded influence over the multitude, thought proper, and certainly, in a poetical light, with great effect, to adopt the dogmata and machinery of James, the reign of superstition was, for a time, not only upheld, but extended among the inferior orders of the people.

“ Every goblin of ignorance,” observes Warton, speaking of this period, “ did not vanish at the first glimmerings of the morning of science. Reason suffered a few demons still to linger, which she chose to retain in her service under the guidance of poetry. Men believed, or were willing to believe, that spirits were yet hovering around, who brought with them *airs from heaven, or blasts from hell*, that the ghost was duely released from his prison of torment at the



sound of the curfew, and that fairies imprinted mysterious circles on the turf by moon-light. Much of this credulity was even consecrated by the name of science and profound speculation. Prospero had not yet *broken and buried his staff*, nor *drowned his book deeper than did ever plummet sound*. It was now that the alchymist, and the judicial astrologer, conducted his occult operations by the potent intercourse of some preternatural being, who came obsequious to his call, and was bound to accomplish his severest services, under certain conditions, and for a limited duration of time. It was actually one of the pretended feats of these fantastic philosophers, to evoke the queen of the Fairies in the solitude of a gloomy grove, who, preceded by a sudden rustling of the leaves, appeared in robes of transcendent lustre. The Shakspeare of a more instructed and polished age would not have given us a magician darkening the sun at noon, the sabbath of the witches, and the cauldron of incantation." \*

The history of the popular mythology, therefore, of this era, at a time when it was cherished by the throne, and adopted, in its fullest extent, by the greatest poetical genius which ever existed, must necessarily occupy a large share of our attention. So extensive, indeed, is the subject, and so full of interest and curiosity, that to exhaust it in this division of the work, would be to encroach upon that symmetry of plan, that relative proportion which we wish to preserve. The four great subjects, therefore, of *Fairies*, *Witchcraft*, *Magic*, and *Apparitions*, will be deferred to the Second Part, and annexed as Dissertations to our remarks on the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, the *Tempest*, and *Hamlet*.

As a consequent of this decision, the present chapter, after noticing, in a *general* way, the various credulities of the country, will dwell, at some length, on those periods of the year which have been peculiarly devoted to superstitious rites and observances, and include the residue of the subject under the heads of *omens*, *charms*, *sympathies*, *cures*, and *miscellaneous superstitions*.

\* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 496.

It is from the *Winter-Night's Conversation* of the lower orders of the people that we may derive, in any age, the most authentic catalogue of its superstitions. This fearful pleasure of children and uneducated persons, and the eager curiosity which attends it, have been faithfully painted by Shakspeare: —

Pray you sit by us,  
And tell's a tale.

*Mamillius.* Merry, or sad, shall't be?  
*Her.* As merry as you will.  
*Mam.* A sad tale's best for winter :  
I have one of sprites and goblins.  
*Her.* Let's have that, sir.  
Come on, sit down : — Come on, and do your best  
To fright me with your sprites : you're powerful at it.  
*Mam.* There was a man, ——  
*Her.* Nay, come, sit down ; then on.  
*Mam.* Dwelt by a church-yard ; — I will tell it softly ;  
Yon crickets shall not hear it.  
*Her.* Come on then,  
And give't in mine ear." \*

For the particulars forming the subject-matter of these tales, and for their effect on the hearers, we must have recourse to writers contemporary with the bard, whose object it was to censure or detail these legendary wonders. Thus Lavaterus, who wrote a book *De Spectris*, in 1570, which was translated into English in 1572, remarks that “if when men sit at the table, mention be made of spirits and elves, many times wemen and children are so afrayde that they dare scarce go out of dores alone, least they should meete wyth some evyl thing: and if they chaunce to heare any kinde of noise, by and by they thinke there are some spirits behynde them:” and again in a subsequent page, “simple foolish men—imagine that there be certayne elves or fairies of the earth, and tell many straunge and marvellous tales of them, which they have heard of their grand-mothers and mothers, howe they have appeared unto those of the

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 255, 256. Winter's Tale, act ii. sc. 1.



house, have done service, have rocked the cradell, and (which is a signe of good luck) do continually tary in the house." \* He has the good sense, however, to reprobate the then general custom, a practice which has more or less prevailed even to our own times, of frightening children by stories and assumed appearances of this kind. "It is a common custome," he observes, "in many places, that at a certaine of time the yeare, one with a nette or visarde on his face maketh Children afrayde, to the ende that ever after they should laboure and be obediente to their Parentes: afterward they tel them that those which they saw, were Bugs, Witches, and Haggas, which thing they verily believe, and are commonly miserablie afrayde. How be it, it is not expedient so to terrifie Children. For sometimes through great feare they fall into dangerous diseases, and in the nyght crye out, when they are fast asleep. Salomon teacheth us to chasten children with the rod, and so to make them stand in awe: he doth not say, we must beare them in hande they shall be devoured of Bugges, Hags of the night, and such lyke monsters." † But it is to Reginald Scot that we are indebted for the most curious and extensive euumeration of these fables which haunted our progenitors from the cradle to the grave. "In our childhood," says he, "our mother's maids have so terrified us with an *ouglie divell* having hornes on his head, fier in his mouth, and a taile in his breech, eies like a bason, fanges like a dog, clawes like a beare, a skin like a Niger, and a voice roaring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we heare one crie Bough: and they have so fraid us with *bull-beggars, spirits, witches, urchens, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, syrens, kit with the can'sticke, tritons, centaurs, dwarfes, giants, imps, calcars, conjurors, nymphes, changlings, Incubus, Robin good-fellowe, the spoorne,*

\* "Of Ghostes and spirites walking by nyght, and of strange noyses, crackes, and sundry forewarnynges, whiche commonly happen before the death of menne, great slaughters, and alterations of kyngdomes. One Booke, Written by Lewes Lavaterus of Tigurine. And translated into Englyshe by R. H." Printed at London by Henry Benneyman, for Richard Watkyns, 1572. Vide p. 14. and 49.

† Lavaterus, p. 21.



the *mare*, the *man in the oke*, the *hell-waine*, the *fierdrake*, the *puckle* *Tom thombe*, *hob goblin*, *Tom tumbler*, *boneless*, and such other bugs, that we are afraid of our own shadowes: in so much as some never feare the divell, but in a darke night; and then a polled sheepe is a perillous beast, and manie times is taken for our father's soule, speciallie in a churchyard, where a right hardie man heretofore scant durst passe by night, but his haire would stand upright." \*

That this mode of passing away the time, "the long solitary winter nights," was as much in vogue in 1617 as in 1570 and 1580, is apparent from Burton, who reckons among the *ordinary recreations* of winter, tales of *giants*, *dwarfs*, *witches*, *fayries*, *goblins*, and *friers*. †

The predilection which existed, during this period of our annals for the marvellous, the terrible, and romantic, especially among the peasantry, has been noticed by several of our best writers. Addison, in reference to the genius of Shakspeare for the wild and wonderful in poetry, remarks, that "our forefathers loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of witchcraft, prodigies, charms, and inchantments. There was not a village in England that had not a ghost in it; the churchyards were all haunted; every large common had a circle of fairies belonging to it; and there was scarce a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit ‡;" and Mr. Grose, after enumerating several popular superstitions, extends the subject in a very entertaining manner. "In former times," says he, "these notions were so prevalent, that it was deemed little less than atheism to doubt them; and in many instances the terrors caused by them embittered the lives of a great number of persons of all ages; by degrees almost shutting them out of their own houses, and deterring them from going from one village to another after sun-set. The room in which the head of a family had died, was for a long time untenanted; particularly if they died without a will, or were supposed to

\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, 1580, p. 152, 153.

† Vide Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 172.

‡ Spectator, No. 419., vol. vi. p. 118. of Sharpe's edition. See also Nos. 12. 110. and 117.



have entertained any particular religious opinions. But if any disconsolate old maiden, or love-crossed bachelor, happened to dispatch themselves in their garters, the room where the deed was perpetrated was rendered for ever after uninhabitable, and not unfrequently was nailed up. If a drunken farmer, returning from market, fell from Old Dobbin and broke his neck,—or a carter, under the same predicament, tumbled from his cart or waggon, and was killed by it,—that spot was ever after haunted and impassable: in short, there was scarcely a bye-lane or cross-way but had its ghost, who appeared in the shape of a headless cow or horse; or clothed all in white, glared with its saucer eyes over a gate or stile. Ghosts of superior rank, when they appeared abroad, rode in coaches drawn by six headless horses, and driven by a headless coachman and postilions. Almost every ancient manor-house was haunted by some one at least of its former masters or mistresses, where, besides divers other noises, that of telling money was distinctly heard: and as for the churchyards, the number of ghosts that walked there, according to the village computation, almost equalled the living parishioners: to pass them at night, was an achievement not to be attempted by any one in the parish, the sextons excepted; who perhaps being particularly privileged, to make use of the common expression, never saw any thing worse than themselves.”\*

Of these superstitions, as forming the subject of a *country conversation in a winter's evening*, a very interesting detail has been given by Mr. Bourne; the picture was drawn about a hundred years ago; but, though even then partially applicable, may be considered as a faithful general representation of the two preceding centuries.

“Nothing is commoner in *Country Places*,” says this historian of credulity, “than for a whole family in a *Winter's Evening*, to sit round the fire, and tell stories of *apparitions* and *ghosts*. Some of them have seen spirits in the shapes of cows, and dogs and horses; and some have seen even the devil himself, with a cloven foot.

\* Grose's *Provincial Glossary*, p. 242, 243.



“ Another part of this conversation generally turns upon *Fairies*. These, they tell you, have frequently been heard and seen; nay that there are some still living who were stolen away by them, and confined seven years. According to the description they give of them, who pretend to have seen them, they are in the shape of men, exceeding little: They are always clad in green, and frequent the woods and fields; when they make cakes (which is a work they have been often heard at) they are very noisy; and when they have done, they are full of mirth and pastime. But generally they dance in Moonlight when mortals are asleep, and not capable of seeing them, as may be observed on the following morn; their dancing places being very distinguishable. For as they dance hand in hand, and so make a *circle* in their dance, so next day there will be seen *rings* and *circles* on the grass.

“ Another tradition they hold, and which is often talked of, is, that there are particular places allotted to spirits to walk in. Thence it was that formerly, such frequent reports were abroad of this and that particular place being haunted by a spirit, and that the common people say now and then, such a place is dangerous to be passed through at night, because a spirit walks there. Nay, they'll further tell you, that some spirits have lamented the hardness of their condition, in being obliged to walk in cold and uncomfortable places, and have therefore desired the person who was so hardy as to speak to them, to gift them with a warmer walk, by some well grown *hedge*, or in some *shady vale*, where they might be shelter'd from the rain and wind.

“ The last topick of this conversation I shall take notice of, shall be the tales of *haunted* houses. And indeed it is not to be wondered at, that this is never omitted. For formerly almost every place had a house of this kind. If a house was seated on some melancholy place, or built in some old romantic manner; or if any particular accident had happened in it, such as murder, sudden death, or the like, to be sure that house had a mark set on it, and was afterwards esteemed the habitation of a ghost. In talking upon this point,



they generally show the occasion of the house's being *haunted*, the merry pranks of the spirit, and how it was laid. Stories of this kind are infinite, and there are few villages which have not either had such an house in it, or near it." \*

The quotations which we have now given from writers contemporary with, and subsequent to, Shakspeare, will point out, in a *general* way, the prevalent superstitions of the *country* at this period, and the topics which were usually discussed round the fire-side of the cottage or manorial hall, when the blast blew keen on a December's night, and the faggot's blaze was seen, by fits, illumining the rafter'd roof.

The progress of science, of literature, and rational theology, has, in a very great degree, dissipated these illusions; but there still lingers, in hamlets remote from general intercourse, a somewhat similar spirit of credulity, where the legend of unearthly agency is yet listened to with eager curiosity and fond belief. These vestiges of superstitions which were once universally prevalent, have been seized upon with avidity by many modern poets, and form some of the most striking passages in their works. More particularly the ghostly and traditionary lore of the cotter's winter-night, has been a favourite subject with them. Thus Thomson tells us, that

————— "the village rouzes up the fire,  
While well attested, and as well believed,  
Heard solemn, goes the goblin-story round;  
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all:" †

and Akenside, still more poetically, that

————— "by night  
The village-matron round the blazing hearth  
Suspends the infant-audience with her tales,

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\* Bourne's *Antiquities of the Common People* apud Brand, p. 113, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123.

† *Seasons*, Winter, line 617.

Breathing astonishment ! of witching rhymes,  
 And evil spirits ; of the death-bed call  
 Of him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd  
 The orphan's portion ; of unquiet souls  
 Risen from the grave to ease the heavy guilt  
 Of deeds in life conceal'd ; of shapes that walk  
 At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave  
 The torch of hell around the murderer's bed.  
 At every solemn pause the crowd recoil,  
 Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd  
 With shivering sighs : till eager for th' event,  
 Around the beldame all erect they hang,  
 Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd." \*

The lamented Kirke White has also happily introduced a similar picture ; having described the day-revels of a Whitsuntide wake, he adds,

————— " then at eve  
 Commence the harmless rites and auguries ;  
 And many a tale of ancient days goes round.  
 They tell of wizard seer, whose potent spells  
 Could hold in dreadful thrall the labouring moon,  
 Or draw the fix'd stars from their eminence,  
 And still the midnight tempest. — Then anon,  
 Tell of uncharnel'd spectres, seen to glide  
 Along the lone wood's unfrequented path,  
 Startling the nighted traveller ; while the sound  
 Of undistinguished murmurs, heard to come  
 From the dark centre of the deep'ning glen,  
 Struck on his frozen ear : " †

and lastly Mr. Scott, in his highly interesting poem entitled Rokeby, speaking of the tales of superstition, adds,

" When Christmas logs blaze high and wide,  
 Such wonders speed the festal tide,  
 While Curiosity and Fear,  
 Pleasure and pain, sit crouching near,

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\* Pleasures of Imagination, book i.

† The Remains of Henry Kirke White, vol. i. p. 311.



Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,  
 And village-maidens lose the rose.  
 The thrilling interest rises higher,  
 The circle closes nigh and nigher,  
 And shuddering glance is cast behind,  
 As louder moans the wintery wind." Cant. ii. st. 10.

After this brief outline of the common superstitions of the country, as they existed in the days of Shakspeare, and as they still linger among us, we shall proceed, in conformity with our plan, to notice those Days which have been peculiarly devoted to superstitious rites and observances.

In entering upon this subject, however, it will be necessary to remark, that as several of these days are still kept by the vulgar in the same manner, and with the same spirit of credulity which subsisted in the reign of Elizabeth, it would be superfluous to enter at large into a detail of their ceremonies, and that to mark the coincidence of usage, occurring at these periods, will be nearly all that can be deemed requisite. Thus on *St. Paul's Day*, on *Candlemas Day*, and on *St. Swithin's Day*, the prognosticators of weather still find as much employment, and as much credit as ever. \* *St. Mark's Day* is still beheld with dread, as fixing the destinies of life and death, and *Childermas* still keeps in countenance the doctrine of lucky and unlucky days.

\* Gay, in his *Trivia*, notices, at some length, the prognostications attendant on these days, and which equally apply to ancient and to modern times :—

" All superstition from thy breast repel ;  
 Let cred'ulous boys and prattling nurses tell  
 How if the *Festival of Paul* be clear,  
*Plenty* from lib'ral horn shall strow the year :  
 When the dark skies dissolve in snow and rain,  
 The lab'ring hind shall yoke the steer in vain ;  
 But if the threat'ning winds in tempest roar,  
 Then war shall bathe her wasteful sword in gore.  
 How if, on *Swithen's* feast the welkin lours,  
 And ev'ry penthouse streams with hasty show'rs,  
*Twice twenty days* shall clouds their fleeces drain,  
 And wash the pavements with incessant rain :  
 Let no such vulgar tales debase thy mind,  
 Nor *Paul*, nor *Swithin*, rule the clouds and wind."

A similarity nearly equal may be observed with regard to the rites of lovers ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY. The tradition, that birds choosing their mates on this day, occasioned the custom of drawing valentines, has been the opinion of our poets from Chaucer to the present hour. Shakspeare alludes to it in the following passage :

“ Good-morrow friends. Saint Valentine is past ;  
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ?” \*

The ceremony of this day, however, has been attributed to various sources beside the rural tradition just mentioned. The legend itself of St. Valentine, a presbyter of the church, who was beheaded under the Emperor Claudius, we are assured by Mr. Brand, contains nothing which could give rise to the custom ; but it has been supposed by some to have originated from an observance peculiar to carnival time, which occurred about this very period. It was usual, on this occasion, for vast numbers of knights to visit the different courts of Europe, where they entertained the ladies with pageantry and tournaments. Each lady, at these magnificent feasts, selected a knight, who engaged to serve her for a whole year, and to perform whatever she chose to command. One of the never-failing consequences of this engagement, was an injunction to employ his muse in the celebration of his mistress.

Menage, in his Etymological Dictionary, has accounted for the term *Valentine*, by stating that Madame Royale, daughter of Henry the Fourth of France, having built a palace near Turin, which, in

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 453. *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act iv. sc. 1. Buchanan also beautifully records the same traditionary imagery :

“ Festa Valentino rediit lux ———  
Quisque sibi sociam jam legit ales avem.  
Inde sibi dominam per sortes quaerere in annum  
Mansit ab antiquis mos repetitus avis ;  
Quisque legit dominam, quam casto observet amore,  
Quam nitidis sertis obsequioque colat :  
Mittere cui possit blandi munuscula Veris.”



honour of the Saint, then in high esteem, she called *the Valentine*, at the first entertainment which she gave in it, was pleased to order that the ladies should receive their lovers *for the year* by lots, reserving to herself the privilege of being independent of chance, and of *choosing* her own partner. At the various balls which this gallant princess gave, during the year, it was directed that each lady should receive a nosegay from her lover, and that, at every tournament, the knight's trappings for his horse should be furnished by his allotted mistress, with this proviso, that the prize obtained should be hers. This custom, says Menage, occasioned the parties to be called *Valentines*.

Mr. Brand, in his observations on Bourne's Antiquities, thinks, that the usages of this day are the remains of an antient superstition in the Church of Rome, of choosing *patrons* for the year ensuing, at this season; "and that, because ghosts were thought to walk on the night of this day, or about this time\*;" but Mr. Douce, with more probability, considers them as a relic of paganism. "It was the practice in ancient Rome," he observes, "during a great part of the month of February, to celebrate the *Lupercalia*, which were feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, whence the latter deity was named *februata*, *februalis*, and *februlla*. On this occasion, amidst a variety of ceremonies, the names of young women were put into a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed. The pastors of the early Christian church, who by every possible means endeavoured to eradicate the vestiges of Pagan superstitions, and chiefly by some commutation of their forms, substituted, in the present instance, the names of particular saints instead of those of the women: and as the festival of the *Lupercalia* had commenced about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen Saint Valentine's day for celebrating the new feast, because it occurred nearly at the same time. This is, in part, the opinion of a learned and rational compiler of the lives of the saints, the Reverend Alban Butler. It should

\* Bourne's Antiquities apud Brand, p. 253.

seem, however, that it was utterly impossible to extirpate altogether any ceremony to which the common people had been much accustomed; a fact which it were easy to prove in tracing the origin of various other popular superstitions: and accordingly the outline of the ancient ceremonies was preserved, but modified by some adaptation to the Christian system. It is reasonable to suppose that the above practice of choosing mates would gradually become reciprocal in the sexes; and that all persons so chosen would be called *Valentines*, from the day on which the ceremony took place." \*

The modes of ascertaining the *Valentine* for the ensuing year, were nearly the same in Shakspeare's age as at the present period; they consisted either in drawing lots on Valentine-eve, or in considering the first person whom you met early on the following morning, as the destined object. In the former case the names of a certain number of one sex, were, by an equal number of the other, put into a vase; and then every one drew a name; which for the time was termed their *Valentine*, and was considered as predictive of their future fortune in the nuptial state; in the second there was usually some little contrivance adopted, in order that the favoured object, when such existed, might be the first seen. To this custom Shakspeare refers, when he represents Ophelia, in her distraction, singing,

" Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine." †

The practice of addressing verses, and sending presents, to the person chosen, has been continued from the days of James I., in

\* Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 252, 253.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 281. Mr. Gay has more distinctly recorded this ceremony in the following lines: —

" Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind  
Their paramours with mutual chirpings find;  
I early rose, just at the break of day,  
Before the sun had chas'd the stars away;



which the gifts of Valentines have been noticed by Moresin \*, to modern times ; and we may add a trait, not now observed, perhaps, on the authority of an old English ballad, in which the lasses are directed to pray *cross-legged* to Saint *Valentine*, for good luck. †

It was a usage of the sixteenth century, in its object laudable and useful, for the inhabitants of towns and villages, during the summer-season, to meet after sunset, in the streets, and for the wealthier sort to recreate themselves and their poorer friends with banquets and bonfires. Of this custom Stowe has left us a pleasing account :—" In the moneths of June, and July," he relates, " on the Vigiles of festivall dayes, and on the same festivall dayes in the evenings, after the sun-setting, there were usually made bonfires in the streets, every man bestowing wood or labour towards them. The wealthier sort also before their dores, neere to the said bonfires, would set out tables on the vigiles, furnished with sweet bread, and good drink, and on the festivall dayes with meates and drinks plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit, and be merry with them in great familiarity, praying God for his benefits bestowed on them. These were called bonfires, as well of amity amongst neighbours, that beeing before at controversie, were there by the labour of others reconciled, and made of bitter enemies, loving friends ; as also for the virtue that a great fire hath, to purge

Afield I went, amid the morning dew,  
To milk my kine (for so should housewives do),  
*Thee first I spied, and the first swain we see*  
In spite of fortune shall our true Love be."

\* " Et vere ad Valentini festum à viris habent fœminæ munera, et alio temporis viris dantur." Moresini Deprav. Relig. 160.

† Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 258.—" I have found unquestionable authority," remarks Mr. Brand, " to evince that the custom of chusing Valentines was a sport practised in the houses of the gentry in England as early as the year 1476." Brand apud Ellis, vol. i. p. 48.

The authority alluded to by Mr. Brand, is a letter, in Fenn's Paston Letters, vol. ii. p. 211., dated February 1476.

the infection of the ayre." \* These rites were, however, more particularly practised on MIDSUMMER-EVE, the Vigil of Saint John the Baptist, a period of the year to which our ancestors paid singular attention, and combined with it several superstitious observances. "On the Vigill of Saint John Baptist," continues Stowe, "every man's dore beeing shadowed with greene Birch, long Fennell, Saint John's Wort, Orpin, white Lillies, and such like, garnished upon with Garlands of beautifull flowers, had also Lamps of glasse, with Oyle burning in them all the night, some hung out branches of yron curiously wrought, containing hundreds of Lamps lighted at once, which made a goodly shew." †

Of some of the superstitions connected with this Eve, Barnabe Googe has left us an account in his translation of Neogeorgius, which was published, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, in 1570 :—

"Then doth the joyfull feast of John the Baptist take his turne,  
When bonfires great, with lofty flame, in every towne doe burne,  
And young men round about with maydes doe daunce in every street,  
With garlands wrought of mother-wort, or else of vervaine sweet,  
And many other flowers faire, with violets in their hands;  
Where as they all doe fondly thinke that whosoever stands,  
And thorow the flowers behold the flame, his eyes shall feele no paine.  
When thus till night they daunced have, they through the fire amaine  
With striving mindes doe run, and all their herbs they cast therein;  
And then, with words devout and prayers, they solemnly begin,  
Desiring God that all their illes may there confounded be;  
Whereby they thinke, through all that yeare, from agues to be free." †

This *Midsummer-Eve Fire* and the rites attending it, appear to be reliques of pagan worship, for Gebelin in his *Allegories Orientales* observes, that at the moment of the Summer Solstice the ancients, from the most remote antiquity, were accustomed to light fires, in honour of the New Year, which they believed to have originally commenced in fire. These fires or Feux de joie were accompanied with vows and sacrifices for plenty and prosperity, and with dances

\* Survey of London, 1618, p. 159.

† Vide Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 317.

† Ibid.



and leaping over the flames, "each on his departure snatching a fire-brand of greater or less magnitude, whilst the rest was scattered to the wind, in order that it might disperse every evil as it dispersed the ashes." \*

Many other superstitions, however, than those mentioned by Googe, were practised on this mysterious eve. To one of the most important Shakspeare alludes in the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, where Gadshill says of himself and company, "We have the receipt of *fern-seed*, we walk *invisible*." † Jonson and Fletcher have also ascribed the same wonderful property to this plant, the first in his *New Inn*.

————— "I had  
No medicine, Sir, to go invisible,  
No *fern-seed* in my pocket;" ‡

the second in the *Fair Maid of the Inn*, —

————— "had you Gyges' ring,  
Or the *herb* that gives invisibility?" §

It was the belief of our credulous ancestors, that the *fern-seed* became visible only on St. John's Eve, and at the precise moment of the birth of the Saint; that it was under the peculiar protection of the Queen of Faery, and that on this awful night, the most

\* "L'origine de ce feu que tant de nations conservent encore, et qui se perd dans l'antiquité, est très simple. C'étoit un feu de joie allumé au moment où l'année commençoit; car la première de toutes les Annes, la plus ancienne donc on ait quelque connoissance, s'ouvroit au mois de Juin. —

"Ces feux-de-joie étoient accompagnés en même tems de Vœux et de sacrifices pour la prospérité de peuples et des biens de la terre: on dansoit aussi autour de ce feu; car ya-t-il quelque fête sans danse? et les plus agiles santoient par dessus. En se retirant, chacun emportoit un tison plus ou moins grand, et le reste étoit jetté au vent, afin qu'il emportât tout malheur comme il emportoit ces cendres." Hist. d'Hercule, p. 203.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 249. act ii. sc. 3.

‡ Jonson's Works, act i. sc. 6.

§ Beaumont and Fletcher's Works apud Colman.

tremendous conflicts took place, for its possession, between sorcerers and spirits; for

“ The wond’rous one-night seeding ferne,”

as Browne calls it\*, was conceived not only to confer *invisibility at pleasure*, on those who succeeded in procuring it, but it was also esteemed of sovereign potency in the fabrication of charms and incantations. Those, therefore, who were addicted to the arts of magic, and possessed sufficient courage for the enterprise, were believed to watch in solitude during this solemn period, in order that they might seize the seed on the instant of its appearance.

The achievement, however, was accompanied with great danger; for if the adventurer were not protected by spells of mighty power, he was exposed to the assaults of demons and spirits, who envied him the possession of the plant, and who generally took care that he should lose either his life or his labour in the attempt. “ A person who went to gather it, reported that the spirits whisked by his ears, and sometimes struck his hat, and other parts of his body; and at length, when he thought he had got a good quantity of it, and secured it in papers and a box, when he came home, he found both empty.” †

Another superstition, of a nature highly impressive and terrible, consists in the idea that any person fasting on *Midsummer-Eve*, and sitting in the church-porch, will at midnight see the spirits of those who are to die in the parish during that year, approach and knock at the church door, precisely in the order of time in which they are doomed to depart. It is related, by the author of *Pandemonium*, that one of the company of watchers, on this night, having fallen into a profound sleep, his ghost or spirit, whilst he lay in this state, was seen by the rest of his companions, knocking at the church-door. ‡

\* Chalmers’s English Poets, vol. vi. p. 281. Britannia’s Pastorals, book ii. song 2.

† Grose’s Provincial Glossary, p. 299. ‡ Ibid. p. 285.



Of these wild traditions of the "olden time" Collins has made a most striking use in his Ode to Fear: —

" Ne'er be I found, by thee o'eraw'd,  
In that thrice-hallow'd eve, abroad,  
When ghosts, as cottage-maids believe,  
Their pebbled beds permitted leave;  
And goblins haunt, from fire, or fen,  
Or mine, or flood, the walks of men!"

The observance of *Midsummer-Eve* by rejoicings, spells, and charms, has continued until within these fifty years, especially in Cornwall, in the North of England, and in Scotland. Bourne, in 1725, tells us, that "on the Eve of St. John Baptist, commonly called *Midsummer-Eve*, it is usual in the most of country places, and also here and there in towns and cities, for both old and young to meet together, and be merry over a large fire, which is made in the open street. Over this they frequently leap and play at various games, such as running, wrestling, dancing, &c. But this is generally the exercise of the younger sort; for the old ones, for the most part, sit by as spectators, and enjoy themselves and their bottle. And thus they spend their time till mid-night, and sometimes till cock-crow \*;" and Borlase, in his History of Cornwall, about thirty years later, states, that "the Cornish make bonfires in every village on the Eve of St. John Baptist's and St. Peter's Days." †

It was a common superstition in the days of Shakspeare, and for two centuries preceding him, that the future husband or wife might be discovered on this Eve or on St. Agnes' night, by due fasting and

\* Bourne's Antiquities, p. 301.

† Stowe also mentions, that bonfires and rejoicings were observed on the Eve of St. Peter and Paul the Apostles; he gives likewise a curious account of the *Marching Watches* which had been regularly kept on Midsummer-Eve, time out of mind, by the citizens of London and other large towns; but these had ceased before the age of Shakspeare, the last having been appointed by Sir John Gresham, in 1548, though an attempt was made to procure their revival, by John Montgomery in 1585, who published a book on the subject, dedicated to Sir Thos. Pullison, then Lord Mayor; this offer however did not succeed.

by certain ceremonies ; thus, if a maiden, fasting on *Midsummer-Eve*, laid a clean cloth at midnight, with bread, cheese, and ale, and sate down, with the street door open, the person whom she is fated to marry will enter the room, fill the glass, drink to her, bow and retire.\* A similar effect, as to the visionary appearance of the destined bridegroom, was supposed to follow the sowing of hempseed on this night, either in the field or church-yard. Mr. Strutt, depicting the manners of the fifteenth century, has given this latter superstition, from the mouth of an imaginary witch, in the following rhymes : —

“ Around the church see that you go,  
With kirtle white and girdle blue,  
At midnight thrice, and hempseed sow;  
Calling upon your lover true,  
Thus shalt thou say;  
These seeds I sow: swift let them grow,  
Till he, who must my husband be,  
Shall follow me and mow:”†

a charm which appears to have been in vogue even in the time of Gay, who, in his *Shepherd's Week*, makes Hobnelia say,—

“ At *eve* last *midsummer* no sleep I sought,  
But to the field a bag of hempseed brought;  
I scatter'd round the seed on every side,  
And three times in a trembling accent cried,  
“ This hempseed with my virgin hand I sow,  
Who shall my true-love be, the crop shall mow.”  
I straight look'd back, and if my eyes speak truth,  
With his keen scythe behind me came the youth.”

The Spell, line 27.

Another mode, which prevailed in the 16th and 17th centuries, of procuring similar information on this festival, through the medium of dreams, consisted in digging for what was called the plantain

\* Grose's Provincial Glossary, p. 285.

† Queenhoo-Hall, vol. i. p. 136.



coal ; the search was to commence exactly at noon, and the material, when found, to be placed on the pillow at night. Of a wild-geese expedition of this kind Aubrey reports himself to have been a spectator. "The last summer," says he, "on the day of St. John Baptist, 1694, I accidentally was walking in the pasture behind Montague-house: it was twelve o'clock. I saw there about two or three and twenty young women, most of them well habited, on their knees, very busy, as if they had been weeding. I could not presently learn what the matter was ; at last, a young man told me that they were looking for a coal under the root of a plantain, to put under their heads that night, and they should dream who would be their husbands: it was to be found that day and hour." He adds, "the women have several magical secrets handed down to them by tradition for this purpose, as, on St. Agnes' night, 21st January, take a row of pins, and pull out every one one after another, saying a paternoster, or 'our father,' sticking a pin in your sleeve, and you will dream of him or her you shall marry \*;" spells to which Ben Jonson alludes, when he says, —

— "On sweet St. Agnes' night  
Please you with the promis'd sight ;  
Some of husbands, some of lovers,  
Which an empty dream discovers." †

That it was the custom, in Elizabeth's and James's days, to tell tales or perform plays and masques on Christmas-Eve, on Twelfth Night, and on *Midsummer-Eve*, may be drawn from the dramas of Shakspeare, and the masques of Jonson. The *Midsummer-Night's Dream* of the former, appears to have been so called, because its exhibition was to take place on that night, for the *time of action* of the piece itself, is the vigil of May-Day, as is that of the *Winter's Tale* the period of sheep-shearing. It is probable also, as Mr. Steevens has observed, that Shakspeare might have been influenced in his choice of the fanciful machinery of this play, by the recollection of

\* Aubrey's Miscellanies, p. 103.

† Jonson's Works, fol. edit. vol. i.

the proverb attached to the season, and which he has himself introduced in the *Twelfth-Night*, where Olivia remarks of Malvolio's apparent distraction, that it "is a very *Midsummer madness* \*;" an adage founded on the common opinion, that the brain, being heated by the intensity of the sun's rays, was more susceptible of those flights of imagination which border on insanity, than at any other period of the year.

The next season distinguished by any very remarkable tincture of the popular creed, is Michaelmas, or the Feast of ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS. When ever this day comes, says Bourne, "it brings into the minds of the people, that old opinion of *Tutelar Angels*, that every man has his *Guardian Angel*; that is one particular angel who attends him from his coming in, till his going out of life, who guides him through the troubles of the world, and strives as much as he can, to bring him to heaven." †

That the doctrine of the ministry of angels, and their occasional interference with the affairs of man, is an *old opinion*, cannot be denied. It pervades the whole of the Old and New Testaments, and appears to have been an article of the patriarchal creed; for from the Book of Job, perhaps the oldest which exists, may be drawn not only the doctrine of the ministration of angels, but that of their division into certain distinct orders, such as angels, intercessors, destroyers, &c. ‡ With this general information we ought to have been content: but superstition has been busy in promulgating hierarchies, the offspring of its own heated imagination; in minutely ascertaining the numbers and offices of angels in heaven and on earth; and in naming and appropriating certain of them as the guardians and protectors of kingdoms, cities, families, and individuals. The mythologies of Persia, Arabia, and Greece, abound with these arbitrary arrangements; Hesiod declares that the angels appointed to

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 359. act iii. sc. 4.

† Bourne's Antiquities, p. 320, 321.

‡ Vide Job, chap. xxxiii. v. 22, 23.



watch over the earth, amount exactly to thirty-thousand\*; and Plato divides the world of spirits good and bad into nine classes, in which he has been followed by some of the philosophising Christians. The angelic hierarchy of Dionysius, however, is the one usually adopted; he professes to interfere only with good spirits, and divides his angels, perhaps in imitation of Plato, into nine orders; the first he terms *seraphim*, the second *cherubim*, the third *thrones*, the fourth *dominations*, the fifth *virtues*, the sixth *powers*, the seventh *principalities*, the eighth *archangels*, and the ninth *angels*.† Not content with this he goes still farther, and has assigned to every country, and almost to every person of eminence, a peculiar angel, thus to Adam he gives *Razael*; to Abraham, *Zakiel*; to Isaiah, *Raphael*; to Jacob, *Pehiel*; to Moses, *Metatron*, &c., speaking, as Calvin observes, not as if by report, but as though he had slipped down from heaven, and told of the things which he had seen there.‡

Of this systematic hierarchy the greater portion formed, during the age of Shakspeare, and for nearly a century afterwards, an important part of the popular creed, as may be ascertained from an inspection of Scot on Witchcraft in 1584, Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells, their Names, Orders, and Offices*, in 1635, and from Burton's *Anatomie of Melancholy*, which, though first published in 1617, continued to re-appear in frequent editions until the close of the seventeenth century.

\* Opera et Dies, vol. i. 246.

† Dionys. in Cælest. Hierarch. cap. ix. x.

‡ Calv. Lib. Instit. I. c. xiv. It is worthy of remark, that Reginald Scot, from whose *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, p. 500., this account of the hierarchy of Dionysius is taken, has brought forward a passage from his kinsman Edward Deering, which broaches the same doctrine as that held by Bishop Horsley in the last sermon which he ever wrote. "If you read Deering," says Scot, "upon the first chapter to the Hebrues, you shall see this matter (the angelic theory of Dionysius) notablie handled; where he saith, *that whensoever archangell is mentioned in the Scriptures it signifieth our saviour Christ, and no creature.*" p. 501.—Now in the sermon alluded to by Horsley, the text of which is Dan. iv. 17., he affirms, that the term "Michael," or "Michael the Archangel," wherever it occurs, is nothing more than a name for our Saviour. Vide Sermons, vol. ii. p. 376.



The doctrine of *Guardian Angels*, as appropriated to individuals, more especially appears to have been entertained by Shakspeare and his contemporaries; an idea pleasing to the human mind, though, in the opinion of the most acute theologians, not warranted by Scripture; where only the general ministry of angels is recorded; and, accordingly, the collect of the day, in our admirable Liturgy, merely refers to, and prays for, such general interference in our behalf.

B The assignment of a good angel, or of a good and bad angel to every individual, as soon as created, is supported by the English Lavaterus in 1572, and recorded as the general object of belief, by the rational Scot, in his interesting discourse on spirits.

“Saint Herome in his Commentaries,” says Lavaterus, “and other fathers do conclude, that God doth assigne unto every soule assoone as he createth him his peculiar Angell, which taketh care of him. But whether that every one of the elect have hys proper angell, or many angells be appoynted unto him, it is not expresly sette foorth, yet this is most sure and certayne, that God hath given his angells in charge to have regard and care over us. Daniel witnesseth in his tenth chapter, that angells have also charge of kingdomes, by whom God keepeth and protecteth them, and hindreth the wicked counsels of the devill. It may be proved by many places of the Scripture, that all Christian men have not only one angell, but also many, whome God imployeth to their service. In the 34 psalm it is sayde, the angell of the Lorde pitcheth his tentes rounde about them whiche feare the Lorde, and helpeth them: which ought not to be doubted but that it is also at this daye, albeit we see them not. We reade that they appearing in sundrye shapes, have admonished menne, have comforted them, defended them, delivered them from daunger, and also punished the wicked. Touching this matter, there are plentiful examples, whiche are not needefull to be repeated in this place. Somtimes they have eyther appeared in sleep, or in manner of visions, and sometimes they have performed their office, by some internall operations: as when a man’s mynde foresheweth him, that a thing shall so happen, and



after it happeneth so in deede, which thyng I suppose is doone by God, through the minesterie of angells. Angells for the most part take upon them the shapes of men, wherein they appeare.” \*

“ Monsieur Bodin, M. Mal. and manie other papists,” observes Scot, who gives us his opinion on the nature of angels, “ gather upon the seventh of Daniel, that there are just ten millions of angels in heaven. Manie saie that angels are not by nature, but by office. Finallie, it were infinite to shew the absurd and curious collections hereabout. I for my part thinke with Calvine, that angels are creatures of God; though Moses spake nothing of their creation, who onelie applied himselfe to the capacitie of the common people, reciting nothing but things seene. And I saie further with him, that they are heavenlie spirits, whose ministration and service God useth: and in that respect are called angels. I saie yet againe with him, that it is verie certaine, that they have no shape at all; for they are spirits, who never have anie: and finallie, I saie with him, that the Scriptures, for the capacitie of our wit, dooth not in vaine paint out angels unto us with wings; bicause we should conceive, that they are readie swiftlie to succour us. And certeinlie all the sounder divines doo conceive and give out, that both the names and also the number of angels are set downe in the Scripture by the Holie-ghost, in termes to make us understand the greatnesse and the manner of their messages; which (I saie) are either expounded by the number of angels, or signified by their names.

“ Furthermore, the schoole doctors affirme, that foure of the superior orders of angels never take anie forme or shape of bodies, neither are sent of anie arrand at anie time. As for archangels, they are sent onlie about great and secret matters; and angels are common hacknies about everie trifle; and that these can take what shape or bodie they list: marie they never take the forme of women or children. Item, they saie that angels take most terrible shapes: for *Gabriel* appeared to *Marie*, when he saluted hir, *facie rutilante, veste*

\* Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght, p. 160, 161.

*coruscante, ingressu mirabili, aspectu terribili, &c.*: that is, with a bright countenance, shining attire, wonderfull gesture, and a dredfull visage, &c. *It hath beene long, and continueth yet a constant opinion, not onlie among the papists; but among others also, that everie man hath assigned him, at the time of his nativitie, a good angell and a bad.* For the which there is no reason in nature, nor authoritie in Scripture. For not one angell, but all the angels are said to rejoyse more of one convert, than of ninetie and nine just. Neither did one onlie angel conveie Lazarus into Abraham's bosome. And therefore I conclude with Calvine, that he which referreth to one angel, the care that God hath to everie one of us, dooth himselfe great wrong." \*

NS That Shakspeare embraced the doctrine common in his age, which assigns to every individual, at his birth, a good and bad angel, an idea highly poetical in itself, and therefore acceptable to a fervid imagination, is evident from the following remarkable passages:

"There is a good angel about him — but the devil out-bids him too." †

"You follow the young prince up and down like his ill angel." ‡

"Thy dæmon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is  
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,  
Where Cæsar's is not; but near him, thy angel  
Becomes a Fear, as being o'erpowered —  
————— I say again, thy spirit  
Is all afraid to govern thee near him;  
But, he away, 'tis noble;" §

and in Macbeth the same imagery is repeated —

————— "near him,  
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's." ||

\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 505, 506.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 109. Henry IV. Part ii. act ii. sc. 4.

‡ Ibid. vol. xii. p. 36. Henry IV. Part ii. act i. sc. 2.

§ Ibid. vol. xvii. p. 94, 95. Antony and Cleopatra, act ii. sc. 3.

|| Ibid. vol. x. p. 149.



These lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Macbeth*, which are founded on a passage in North's Plutarch, where the soothsayer says to Antony, "thy Demon, (that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) is affraied of his," sufficiently prove that the Roman Catholic doctrine of a good and evil angel is *immediately* drawn from the belief of Pagan antiquity in the agency of good and evil genii, a dogma to which we know their greatest philosophers were addicted, as is apparent from the Demon of Socrates.

Of the general, and as it may be termed, the patriarchal, doctrine of the ministry of angels, no poet has made so admirable an use as Milton, who tells us, in his *Paradise Lost*, that

" Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,  
All these, with ceaseless praise, his works behold,  
Both day and night. How often, from the steep  
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard  
Celestial voices, through the midnight air,  
Sole or responsive to each other's note,  
Singing their great Creator! oft, in bands,  
While they keep watch; or, nightly walking round,  
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,  
In full harmonic number join'd; their songs  
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven." \*

We must be permitted to observe, in this place, that Dr. Horsley has, with great propriety, drawn a marked distinction between the full-formed hierarchy of fanciful theologians, and the Scripture-account of angelic agency; while he reprobates the one, he supports the other; "those," says he, "who broached this doctrine (of an hierarchy of angels governing this world) could tell us exactly how many orders there are, and how many angels in each order; that the different orders have their different departments in government assigned to them; some, constantly attending in the presence of God, form his cabinet council; others are his provincial governors; every kingdom

\* Book iv. line 677.

in the world having its appointed guardian angel, to whose management it is intrusted: others again are supposed to have the charge and custody of individuals. This system is, in truth, nothing better than Pagan polytheism." He then subsequently and most judiciously gives us the following summary of Biblical information on the subject: "that the holy angels," he remarks, "are often employed by God in his government of this sublunary world, is indeed clearly to be proved by holy writ: that they have powers over the matter of the universe analogous to the powers over it which men possess, greater in extent, but still limited, is a thing which might reasonably be supposed, if it were not declared: but it seems to be confirmed by many passages of holy writ, from which it seems also evident that they are occasionally, for certain specific purposes, commissioned to exercise those powers to a prescribed extent. That the evil angels possessed, before the fall, the like powers, which they are still occasionally permitted to exercise for the punishment of wicked nations, seems also evident. That they have a power over the human sensory (which is part of the material universe), which they are occasionally permitted to exercise, by means of which they may inflict diseases, suggest evil thoughts, and be the instruments of temptations, must also be admitted."\*

We shall conclude these observations on St. Michael's Day by adding, that in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was the custom of landlords to invite their tenants on this day, and to dine them in their great halls on *Geese*; birds which were then only kept by the gentry, and therefore esteemed a great delicacy. We must consequently set aside the tradition which attributes the introduction of this bird on the festival of St. Michael to Queen Elizabeth; the tale avers, that, being on her road to Tilbury Fort, she dined on Michaelmas Day 1588, at Sir Neville Umfreville's seat, near that place, and that the knight, recollecting her partiality for high-seasoned food, had taken care to procure for her a savoury goose,

\* Sermons, vol. ii. p. 412, 415, 416.



after eating heartily of which she called for a *half-pint bumper of Burgundy*, and had scarcely drank it off to the destruction of the *Spanish Armada*, when she received the news of that joyful event; delighted with the speedy accomplishment of her toast, she is said to have annually commemorated this day with a goose, and that, of course, the example was followed by the Court and through the kingdom at large. The custom, however, must be referred to a preceding age, in which it will be found that the nobility and gentry had usually this delicious bird at their tables, both on St. Michael's and St. Martin's Day. \*

We now approach another remarkably superstitious period of the year, the observance of which took place on the 31st of October, being the *Vigil of All Saints' Day*, and has been therefore commonly termed ALL HALLOW EVE. In the North of England, and in Scotland, this was formerly a night of rejoicing and of the most mysterious rites and ceremonies. As beyond the Tweed the harvest was seldom completely got in before the close of October, *Halloween* became a kind of Harvest-home-feast; thus, Mr. Shaw informs us, in his History of the Province of Moray, that "a solemnity was kept, on the Eve of the first of November, as a thanksgiving for the safe Ingathering of the produce of the fields. This I am told, but have not seen it, is observed in Buchan, and other countries, by having *Hallow-Eve Fires* kindled on some rising ground." † In England Hallow-eve has been generally called *Nut-crack Night*, from one of the numerous spells usually had recourse to at this season; and in Shakspeare it is alluded to under the customary appellation of *Hallowmas*, where Speed tells Valentine in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, that he knows him to be in love, because he has learnt "to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas ‡;" a simile which refers to a relique of the Roman Catholic Festival of *All Souls' Day* on the 2d of November, when prayers were offered up for the repose of the

\* Vide Brady's Clavis Calendaria, vol. ii. p. 180.

† Brand's Appendix to Bourne's Antiquities, p. 382.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 205. act ii. sc. 1.

souls of the departed ; it being the custom, in Shakspeare's time, and is still, we believe, observed in some parts of the North, for the poor on *All-Saints-Day* to go a *souling*, as they term it, and in a plaintive or *puling* voice to petition for *soul-cakes*. " In various parts of England," remarks Brady, " the remembrance of monastic customs is still preserved by giving oaten cakes to the poor neighbours, conformably to what was once the general usage, particularly in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Herefordshire, &c. when, by way of expressing gratitude, the receivers of this liberality offered the following homely benediction :

" God have your *saul*,  
Bones and all ;"

bearing more the appearance, in these enlightened days, of rustic scoff, than of thankfulness." \*

What has rendered All-Hallow-Eve, however, a period of mysterious dread, is the tradition, that on this night the host of evil spirits, witches, wizards, &c. are executing their baneful errands, and that the fairy court holds a grand annual procession, during which, those who have been carried off by the fairies may be recovered, provided the attempt be made within a year and a day from the abstraction of the person stolen. That this achievement, which was attended with great peril, could only be performed on Hallow-Eve, and that this night was esteemed the anniversary of the elfin tribe, may be established on the evidence of our northern poets. Montgomery, in his *Flying against Polwart*, published about 1584, thus mentions the procession :

" In the hinder end of harvest, on All-hallow een,  
When our *gude neighbours* dois ride, if I read right,  
Some buckled on a buneward, and some on a been,  
Ay trottrand in troupes from the twilight ;

---

\* *Clavis Calendaria*, vol. ii. p. 229.



Some saidled a she-ape, all grathed into green,  
 Some hobland on a hemp stalk, hovard to the hight,  
 The king of Pharie and his court, with the elf queen,  
 With many elfish incubus was ridand that night ;” \*

and in the ballad called *Young Tamlane*, whose antiquity is ascertained from being noticed in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, the chief incident of the story is the recovery of Tamlane from the power of the fairies on this holy eve : —

“ This night is Hallowe’en, Janet ;  
 The morn is Hallowday ;  
 And, gin ye dare your true love win,  
 Ye have nae time to stay.

The night it is good Hallowein,  
 When fairy folk will ride ;  
 And they, that wad their true love win,  
 At Miles Cross they maun bide.” †

It is still recorded by tradition, relates Mr. Scott, that “ the wife of a farmer in Lothian having been carried off by the fairies, she, during the year of probation, repeatedly appeared on Sunday, in the midst of her children, combing their hair. On one of these occasions she was accosted by her husband ; when she related to him the unfortunate event which had separated them, instructed him by what means he might win her, and exhorted him to exert all his courage, since her temporal and eternal happiness depended on the success of his attempt. The farmer, who ardently loved his wife, set out on Hallowe’en, and, in the midst of a plot of furze, waited impatiently for the procession of the fairies. At the ringing of the fairy bridles, and the wild unearthly sound which accompanied the cavalcade, his heart failed him, and he suffered the ghostly train to pass by without interruption. When the last had rode past, the whole troop vanished, with loud shouts of laughter and exultation ; among which

\* Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. ii. p. 221.

† *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 238.

he plainly discovered the voice of his wife, lamenting that he had lost her for ever." \*

Numerous have been the ceremonies, spells, and charms, which formerly distinguished All-Hallow-Eve. In England, except in a few remote places in the North, they have ceased to be observed for the last half century; but in the West of Scotland they are still retained with a kind of religious veneration, as is sufficiently proved by the inimitable poem of Burns, entitled *Halloween*, which, in a vein of exquisite poetry and genuine humour, minutely details the various superstitions, which have been practised on this night from time immemorial. Of these, as including all which prevailed in England, and which were, in a great degree, common to both countries, in the time of Shakspeare, we shall give a few sketches, nearly in the words of Burns, as annexed in the notes to his poem, merely observing that one of the spells, that of sowing hemp-seed, is omitted, as having been already described among the rites of Midsummer-Eve.

The *first* ceremony of Hallow-Eve consisted in the lads and lasses pulling each a *stock*, or plant of kail. They were to go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and to pull the first they met with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, was prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells — the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth, stuck to the root, that was considered as the *tocher*, or fortune; and the taste of the *custoc*, that is, the heart of the stem, was deemed indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, were placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brought into the house, were, according to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question.

In the *second*, the lasses were to go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wanted the *top-pickle*, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question would come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

\* Scott's Minstrelsy, vol. ii. p. 221, 222.



The *third* depended on the burning of nuts, and was a favourite charm both in England and Scotland. A lad and lass were named to each particular nut, as they laid them in the fire, and accordingly as they burnt quietly together, or started from beside each other, the course and issue of the courtship were to be determined.

In the *fourth*, success could only be obtained by strictly adhering to the following directions. Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and, darkling, throw into the *pot*, a clue of blue yarn ; wind it in a new clue off the old one : and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread ; demand, who holds it ? and an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and sirname of your future spouse.

To perform the *fifth*, you were to take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass ; you were then to eat an apple before it, combing your hair all the time ; when the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

The *sixth* was likewise a solitary charm, in which it was necessary to go *alone* and *unperceived* to the *barn*, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible, lest the *being*, about to appear, should shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then you were to take the machine used in winnowing the corn, and go through all the attitudes of letting down the grain against the wind ; and on the third repetition of this ceremony, an apparition would be seen passing through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure of your future companion for life, and also the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

To secure an effective result from the *seventh*, you were ordered to take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *Bear-stack*, and fathom it three times round ; when during the last fathom of the last time, you would be sure to catch in your arms the appearance of your destined yoke-fellow.

In order to carry the *eighth* into execution, one or more were in-joined to seek a south running spring or rivulet, where “ three lairds lands meet,” and to dip into it the left shirt-sleeve. You were then

to go to bed in sight of a fire, and to hang the wet sleeve before it to dry ; it was necessary, however, to lie awake, when at midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the future husband or wife, would come, and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it. \*

For the due performance of the *ninth*, you were directed to take three dishes ; to put clean water in one, foul water in another, and to leave the third empty : you were then to blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes were ranged, ordering him to dip the left hand ; when, if this happened to be in the clean water, it was a sign that the future conjugal mate would come to the bar of matri-

\* The powers of description which Burns has evinced in one of the stanzas, while relating the effects of this spell, are truly great : —

“ A wanton widow Leezie was  
 As canty as a kittlen ;  
 But och ! that night, among the shaws,  
 She got a fearfu’ settlin !  
 She thro’ the whins, an’ by the cairn,  
 An’ owre the hill gaed scrievin,  
 Where three lairds lands met at a burn,  
 To dip her left sark-sleeve in,  
Was bent that night.

*Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays  
 As thro’ the glen it wimpl’t ;  
 Whyles round a rocky scar it strays ;  
 Whyles in a wiel it dimpl’t ;  
 Whyles glitter’d to the nightly rays,  
 Wi’ bickering, dancing dazzle ;  
 Whyles cookit underneath the braes,  
 Below the spreading hazle,  
Unseen that night.*

Among the brachens, on the brae,  
 Between her an’ the moon,  
 The deil, or else an outler quey,  
 Gat up an’ gae a croon :  
 Poor Leezie’s heart maist lap the hool ;  
 Near lav’rock-height she jumpit,  
 But mist a fit, an’ in the pool,  
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,  
Wi’ a plunge that night.”



mony a maid ; if in the foul, a widow ; if in the empty dish, it foretold, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. This ceremony was to be repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes was to be altered. \*

Such are the various superstitions which were formerly observed at peculiar periods of the year, and which still maintain a certain portion of credit among the peasantry of Scotland and the North of England. To the catalogue of Saints thus loaded with the rites of popular credulity, may be added one whose celebrity seems to be entirely founded on the casual notice of Shakspeare. In his Tragedy of *King Lear*, Edgar introduces *St. Withold* as an opponent, and a protector against the assaults, of that formidable Incubus, the Night-mare: —

“ Saint Withold footed thrice the wold ;  
He met the Night-mare, and her nine-fold ;  
Bid her alight,  
And her troth plight,  
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee !” †

Warburton informs us, that this agency of the Saint is taken from a story of him in his legend, and that he was thence invoked as the patron saint against the distemper, called the night-mare ; but Mr. Tyrwhitt declares, that he could not find this adventure in the common legends of St. Vitalis, whom he supposes to be synonymous with St. Withold. It is probable that Shakspeare took the hint, for the ascription of this achievement to Withold, from Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, where a similar power is attributed to St. George. That writer, after mentioning that there are magical cures for the night-mare, gives the following as an example : —

“ St. George, S. George, our ladies knight,  
He walkt by daie, so did he by night :  
Untill such time as he hir found,  
He hir beat and he hir bound.

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\* Burns's Works, Currie's edit. vol. iii. p. 126. et seq.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 472—474.

Untill hir troth she to him plight,  
She would not come to hir (him) that night:” \*

a form which is quoted nearly verbatim, and professedly as a night-spell, in the *Monsieur Thomas* of Fletcher. † It should be observed, that the influence over *incubi* ascribed by our poet to St. Withold, has

\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 87.

† See Beaumont and Fletcher apud Colman.

It would appear from the passage just quoted from Shakspeare, that he considered St. Withold as commanding this *female* incubus to alight from those *she* was riding and tormenting; but Fuseli and Darwin, in their delineations, appear to have mounted a *male* fiend, or incubus, on *her* back, who descending from his steed, sate on the breasts of those whom *he* had selected for his victims. The personifications of the painter and the modern poet are forcibly drawn and highly terrific:—

“ So on his NIGHTMARE through the evening fog  
Flits the squab Fiend o'er fen, and lake, and bog;  
Seeks some love-wilder'd Maid with sleep oppress'd,  
Alights, and grinning sits upon her breast.  
— Such as of late amid the murky sky  
Was mark'd by FUSELI'S poetic eye;  
Whose daring tints, with SHAKSPEARE'S happiest grace,  
Gave to the airy phantom form and place—  
Back o'er her pillow sinks her blushing head,  
Her snow-white limbs hang helpless from the bed;  
While with quick sighs, and suffocative breath,  
Her interrupted heart-pulse swims in death.  
— Then shrieks of captur'd towns, and widow's tears,  
Pale lovers stretch'd upon their blood-stain'd biers,  
The headlong precipice that thwarts her flight,  
The trackless desert, the cold starless night,  
And stern-eye'd Murderer with his knife behind,  
In dread succession agonize her mind.  
O'er her fair limbs convulsive tremors fleet,  
Start in her hands, and struggle in her feet;  
In vain to scream with quivering lips she tries,  
And strains in palsy'd lids her tremulous eyes;  
In vain she *wills* to run, fly, swim, walk, creep;  
The WILL presides not in the bower of SLEEP.  
— On her fair bosom sits the Demon-Ape  
Erect, and balances his bloated shape;  
Rolls in their marble orbs his Gorgon-eyes,  
And drinks with leathern ears her tender cries.”

Botanic Garden, 4to. edit. p. 101—103.



been subsequently given to other Calendarian saints, and especially to that dreaded personage St. Swithin, who is indebted to Mr. Colman, in his alteration of *Lear*, for the transference of this singular power.

The mass of popular credulity, indeed, is so enormous, that, limited, as we are in this chapter, to the consideration of only a portion of the subject, it is still difficult, from the number and variety of the materials, to present a sketch which shall be sufficiently distinct and perspicuous. It is highly interesting, however, to observe to what striking poetical purposes Shakspeare has converted these imbecillities of mind, these workings of fear and ignorance; how by his management almost every article which he has selected from the mass of vulgar delusion, assumes a capability of impressing the strongest and most cultivated mind with grateful terror or sublime emotion. No branch, for instance, of the popular creed has been more extended, or more burdened with folly, than the belief in OMENS, and yet what noble imagery has not the poet drawn forth from this accumulation of fear-struck fancy and childish apprehension.

With the view of placing the detail of this vast groupe in a clearer light, it will be necessary to ascertain, what were the principal *omens* most accredited in the days of Shakspeare, and after giving a catalogue of those most worthy of notice, to exhibit a few pictures by the poet as founded on some of the most remarkable articles in the enumeration, and afterwards to fill up the outline with additional circumstances from other resources.

How prone the subjects of Elizabeth were to pry into futurity, through the medium of omens, auguries, and prognostications, may be learnt from the following passage in Scot, taken from his chapter on the "common peoples fond and superstitious collections and observations." "Amongst us," says he, "there be manie wemen and effeminat men (manie papists alwaies, as by their superstition may appeere) that make great divinations upon the shedding of salt, wine, &c. and for the observation of daies, and houres use as great

witchcraft as in anie thing. For if one chance to take a fall from a horse, either in a slipperie or stumbling waie, he will note the daie and houre, and count that time unlucky for a journie. Otherwise, he that receiveth a mischance, wil consider whether he met not a cat, or a hare, when he went first out of his doores in the morning ; or stumbled not at the threshold at his going out ; or put not on his shirt the wrong side outwards ; or his left shoo on his right foote.

“ Many will go to bed againe, if the neeze before their shooes be on their feet ; some will hold fast their left thombe in their right hand when they hickot ; or else will hold their chinne with their right hand whiles a gospell is soong. It is thought verie ill lucke of some, that a child, or anie other living creature, should passe betweene two friends as they walke together ; for they say it portendeth a division of freendship. — The like follie is to be imputed unto them, that observe (as true or probable) old verses, wherein can be no reasonable cause of such effects : which are brought to passe onlie by God’s power, and at his pleasure. Of this sort be these that follow :

“ Remember on S. Vincent’s daie,  
If that the sunne his beames displaie. —

If Paule th’ apostles daie be cleare,  
It dooth foreshew a luckie yeare. —

If Maries purifieng daie,  
Be cleare and bright with sunnie raie,  
Then frost and cold shall be much more,  
After the feast than was before, &c.” \*

In the almanacks of Elizabeth’s and James’s reigns, it was customary, not only to mark the days supposed to have an influence over the weather, but to distinguish, likewise, those considered as lucky or unlucky for making bargains, or transacting business on ; and, accordingly, Webster represents a character in one of his plays declaring —

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\* Scot’s Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 203—205.



" By the almanack, I think  
To choose good days and shun the critical;" \*

and Shakspeare, referring to the same custom and the same doctrine, makes Constance in *King John* exclaim, —

" What hath this day deserv'd? What hath it done;  
That it in golden letters should be set,  
Among the high tides, in the kalendar?  
Nay rather —————

————— if it must stand still, let wives with child  
Pray, that their burdens may not fall this day,  
Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd:  
But (except) on this day, let seamen fear no wreck;  
No bargains break, that are not this day made:  
This day, all things begun come to an ill end;  
Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change!" †

But of omens predictive of good and bad fortune, or of the common events in life, the catalogue may be said to have no termination, and we must refer the reader, for this degrading display of human weakness and folly, to the *Vulgar Errors of Browne*, and to the *Commentaries of Brand on Bourne's Antiquities*, confining the subject to that class of the ominous which has been deemed portentive of the great, the dreadful, and the strange, and which, being surrounded by a certain degree of dignity and awe, is consequently best adapted to the genius of poetry.

That danger, death, or preternatural occurrences should be preceded by warnings or intimations, would appear conformable to the idea of a superintending providence, and therefore faith in such omens has been indulged in, by almost every nation, especially in the infancy of its civilisation. The most usual monitions of this kind are, Lamentings heard in the air; shakings and tremblings of the earth; sudden gloom at noon-day; the appearance of meteors; the shooting of stars; eclipses of the sun and moon; the moon of a bloody

\* The Dutchesse of Malfy, act iii. sc. 3. Vide *Ancient British Drama*, vol. iii. p. 526.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 418, 419.

*hue; the shrieking of owls; the croaking of ravens; the shrilling of crickets; the night-howling of dogs; the clicking of the death-watch; the chattering of pies; the wild neighing of horses, their running wild and eating each other; the cries of fairies; the gibbering of ghosts; the withering of bay-trees; showers of blood; blood dropping thrice from the nose; horrid dreams; demoniacal voices; ghastly apparitions; winding sheets; corpse-candles; night-fires, and strange and fearful noises.* Of the greater part of this tremendous list Shakspeare has availed himself; introducing them as the precursors of murder, sudden death, disasters, and superhuman events. Thus, previous to the assassination of Julius Cæsar, he tells us, that —

“ In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets —  
— Stars with trains of fire and dews of blood ‘appear’d,’  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune’s empire stands,  
Was sick almost to dooms-day with eclipse:” \*

and again, as predictive of the same event, he adds, in another place—

————— “ There is one within,  
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,  
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.  
A lioness hath whelped in the streets;  
And graves have yawn’d and yielded up their dead:  
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,  
In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war,  
Which drizzled blood upon the capitol:  
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,  
Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan;  
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.” †

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 16. Hamlet, act i. sc. 1.

† Ibid. vol. xvi. p. 315. Julius Cæsar, act ii. sc. 2.



The circumstances which are related as preceding and accompanying the murder of Duncan are, perhaps, still more awful and impressive. "The night," says Lennox,

—————" has been unruly : where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down : and, as they say,  
Lamentings heard i' the air ; strange screams of death ;  
And prophecy, with accents terrible,  
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,  
New hatch'd to the woeful time. The obscure bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night : some say, the earth  
Was feverous, and did shake.

*Macb.* " 'Twas a rough night."

" *Old M.* Threescore and ten I can remember well :  
Within the volume of which time, I have seen  
Hours dreadful, and things strange ; but this sore night  
Hath trifled former knowings.

*Rosse.* Ah, good father,  
Thou see'st the heavens, as troubled with man's act,  
Threaten his bloody stage : by the clock, 'tis day,  
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp :  
Is it night's predominance, or the day's shame,  
That darkness does the face of earth intomb,  
When living light should kiss it ?

*Old M.* 'Tis unnatural,  
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,  
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd.

*Rosse.* And Duncan's horses, (a thing most strange and certain,)  
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make  
War with mankind.

*Old M.* 'Tis said, they eat each other.

*Rosse.* Thy did so ; to the amazement of mine eyes,  
That look'd upon't." \*

In the play of *King Richard II.* also, the poet has with great taste and skill selected the following prodigies, as forerunners of the death or fall of kings : —

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 127. *Macbeth*, act ii. sc.3.

" 'Tis thought, the king is dead ; we will not stay.  
 The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd,  
 And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven ;  
 The pale-fac'd moon looks bloody on the earth,  
 And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change ;  
 Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap, —  
 The one, in fear to lose what they enjoy,  
 The other, to enjoy by rage and war :  
 These signs forerun the death or fall of kings." \*

Omens of the same portentous kind are said to have attended the births of Owen Glendower and Richard III., and Shakspeare has accordingly availed himself of the tradition in a manner equally poetical and striking ; the former says of himself, —

————— " At my nativity,  
 The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,  
 Of burning cressets ; and, at my birth,  
 The frame and huge foundation of the earth  
 Shak'd like a coward : —  
 The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds  
 Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields : " †

and Henry VI., in his interview with Richard in the Tower, reproaching the tyrant for his cruelties, tells him, as indicative of his future deeds, that

" The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign ;  
 The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time ;  
 Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempests shook down trees ;  
 The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,  
 And chattering pies in dismal discords sung." ‡

*Dreams, considered as prognostics of good or evil, are frequently introduced by Shakspeare.*

" My dreams will sure prove ominous to day,"

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 82, 83. Act ii. sc. 4.

† Ibid. vol. xi. p. 317. First Part of King Henry IV. act iii. sc. 1.

‡ Ibid. vol. xiv. p. 202, 203. Third Part of King VI. act v. sc. 6.



exclaims Andromache \*; while Romeo declares,

“ My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.” †

But it is chiefly as precursors of misfortune that the poet has availed himself of their supposed influence as omens of future fate. There are few passages in his dramas more terrific than the dreams of Richard the Third and Clarence; the latter, especially, is replete with the most fearful imagery, and makes the blood run chill with horror.

Dæmoniacal voices and shrieks, or monitory intimations and appearances from the tutelary genius of a family, were likewise imagined to precede the deaths of important individuals; a superstition to which Shakspeare alludes in the following lines from his *Troilus and Cressida* :

“ *Troil.* Hark ! you are call'd : Some say, the Genius so  
Cries, *Come !* to him that instantly must die.” ‡

This superstition was formerly very prevalent in England, and still prevails in several districts of Ireland, and in the more remote parts of the Highlands of Scotland. Howell tells us, that he saw at a lapidary's in 1632, a monumental stone, prepared for four persons of the name of Oxenham, before the death of each of whom, the inscription stated a white bird to have appeared and fluttered around the bed, while the patient was in the last agony §; and Glanville, remarks Mr. Scott, mentions one family, the members of which received this solemn sign by music, the sound of which floated from the family-residence, and seemed to die in a neighbouring || wood. It is related, that several of the great Highland families are accustomed to receive intimations of approaching fate by domestic spirits

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 448. *Troilus and Cressida*, act v. sc. 3.

† Ibid. vol. xx. p. 225. Act v. sc. 1.

‡ Ibid. vol. xv. p. 395. Act iv. sc. 4.

§ Familiar Letters, edit. 1726. p. 247.

|| Lady of the Lake, p. 348.

or tutelary genii, who sometimes assume the form of a bird or of a bloody spectre of a tall woman dressed in white, shrieking wildly round the house. Thus, observes Mr. Pennant, the family of Roth-murcas had the *Bodach-an-dun*, or the Ghost of the Hill; the Kin-chardines, the *Spectre of the Bloody Hand*; Gartinley house was haunted by *Bodach-Gartin*; and Tullock Gorms by *Maug-Monlach*, or the *Girl with the Hairy Left Hand*. In certain places, he says, the death of the people is supposed to be foretold by the cries of *Benshi*, or the *Fairy's Wife*, uttered along the very path where the funeral is to pass; and it has been added by others, that when the Benshi becomes visible, she appears in the shape of an old woman, with a blue mantle and streaming hair.

Of this omen, and of another of a similar kind, Mr. Scott has made his usual poetical use in the *Lady of the Lake*, where he relates of Brian, the lone Seer of the Desert, that

“ Late had he heard in prophet's dream,  
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;  
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,  
Of charging steeds, careering fast  
Along Benharrow's shingly side,  
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride.”

This last passage, he informs us, “is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle, is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family-residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.”\*

That the apparition of the Benshie, and the whole train of spectral and dæmoniacal warnings, were in full force in Ireland, during the seventeenth century, we have numerous proofs; the former was commonly called the *Shrieking Woman*, and of the latter a most remarkable instance is given by Mr. Scott, from the MS. Memoirs of the accomplished Lady Fanshaw. “Her husband, Sir Richard, and

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\* *Lady of the Lake*, p. 106. 347.



she, chanced, during their abode in Ireland, to visit a friend, the head of a sept, who resided in his ancient baronial castle, surrounded with a moat. At midnight, she was awakened by a ghastly and supernatural scream, and looking out of bed, beheld, by the moonlight, a female face and part of the form, hovering at the window. The distance from the ground, as well as the circumstance of the moat, excluded the possibility that what she beheld was of this world. The face was that of a young and rather handsome woman, but pale, and the hair, which was reddish, loose and dishevelled. The dress, which Lady Fanshaw's terror did not prevent her remarking accurately, was that of the ancient Irish. This apparition continued to exhibit itself for some time, and then vanished with two shrieks similar to that which had first excited Lady Fanshaw's attention. In the morning, with infinite terror, she communicated to her host what she had witnessed, and found him prepared not only to credit, but to account for the apparition. 'A near relation of my family,' said he, 'expired last night in this castle. We disguised our certain expectation of the event from you, lest it should throw a cloud over the cheerful reception which was your due. Now, before such an event happens in this family and castle, the female spectre whom you have seen always is visible. She is believed to be the spirit of a woman of inferior rank, whom one of my ancestors degraded himself by marrying, and whom afterwards, to expiate the dishonour done to his family, he caused to be drowned in the castle moat.' \* \*

Another set of omens predictive of disaster, supernatural agency, and death, was drawn from the appearances of lights, tapers, and fires. When a flame was seen by night resting on the tops of soldiers' lances, or playing and leaping by fits among the masts and sails of a ship, it was deemed the presage of misfortune; of defeat in battle in the one instance, and of destruction by tempest in the other. As the forerunner of a storm, Shakspeare has introduced it in his *Tempest*, where Ariel says,—

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\* Lady of the Lake, p. 348.

————— “ Sometimes I’d divide  
And burn in many places; on the top-mast,  
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,  
Then meet and join.” \*

NS It was also conceived, that the presence of unearthly beings, ghosts, spirits, and demons, was instantly announced by an alteration in the tint of the lights which happened to be burning; a very popular notion, which the poet adopts in his *Richard the Third*, the tyrant exclaiming, as he awakens,

“ *The lights burn blue* — it is now dead midnight;  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh. —  
Methought, the souls of all that I had murder’d,  
Came to my tent.” †

But the chief superstition annexed to this branch of omens, was founded on the idea, that lights and fires, commonly called *corpse-candles* and *tomb-fires*, preceded deaths and funerals; an article of belief which was equally prevalent among the Celtic and Teutonic nations; and was cherished therefore with the same credulity in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, as in Scandinavia, Germany, and England. In this island, during the sixteenth century, it was generally credited by the common people, that when a person was about to die, a pale flame would frequently appear at the window of the room in which he was laid, and, after pausing there for a moment, would glide towards the church-yard, minutely tracing the path where the future funeral was to pass, and glowing brightly, for a time, on the spot where the body was to be interred. Sometimes, however, instead of lights, a procession was seen by the dim light of the moon: “there have bin seene some in the night,” says the English Lavaterus, “when the moone shin’d, going solemnlie with the corps, according to the custome of the people, or standing before the dores, as if some bodie were to be caried to the church to bury-

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 28. Act i. sc. 2.

† Ibid. vol. xiv. p. 506. Act v. sc. 3.



ing.”\* In Northumberland the fancied appearance of the corpse-light was termed seeing the *Waff* (the blast or spirit) of the person whose death was to take place.

In Wales this superstition was formerly so general, especially in the counties of Cardigan, Caermarthen, and Pembroke, that scarcely any individual was supposed to die without the previous signal of a corpse-candle. Mr. Davis, a Welshman, in a letter to Mr. Baxter, observes, that “they are called candles, from their resemblance, not of the body of the candle, but the fire; because that fire doth as much resemble material candle-lights, as eggs do eggs: saving that in their journey, these candles are sometimes visible, and sometimes disappear; especially if any one comes near to them, or in the way to meet them. On these occasions they vanish, but presently appear again behind the observer, and hold on their course. If a little candle is seen, of a pale or bluish colour, then follows the corpse, either of an abortive, or some infant; if a large one, then the corpse of some one come to age. If there be seen two, three, or more, of different sizes, —some big, some small,—then shall so many corpses pass together, and of such ages or degrees. If two candles come from different places, and be seen to meet, the corpses will do the same; and if any of these candles be seen to turn aside, through some bye-path leading to the church, the following corpse will be found to take exactly the same way.”†

Among the Highlanders of Scotland, likewise, the same species of omen was so implicitly credited, that it has continued in force even to the present day. Of this Mrs. Grant has given us, in one of her ingenious essays, a most remarkable instance, and on the authority, too, of a very pious and sensible clergyman, who was accustomed, she says, “to go forth and meditate at even; and this solitary walk he always directed to his churchyard, which was situated in a shaded spot, on the banks of a river. There, in a dusky October evening,

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\* Of Ghostes and Spirites, 1572. p. 79.

† Vide Grose's Provincial Glossary, article Popular Superstitions, p. 282, 283.

he took his wonted path, and lingered, leaning on the churchyard-wall, till it became twilight, when he saw two small lights rise from a spot within, where there was no stone, nor memorial of any kind. He observed the course these lights took, and saw them cross the river, and stop at an opposite hamlet. Presently they returned, accompanied by a larger light, which moved on between them, till they arrived at the place from which the first two set out, when all the three seemed to sink into the earth together.

“ The good man went into the churchyard, and threw a few stones on the spot where the lights disappeared. Next morning he walked out early, called for the sexton, and shewed him the place, asking if he remembered who was buried there. The man said, that many years ago, he remembered burying in that spot, two young children, belonging to a blacksmith on the opposite side of the river, who was now a very old man. The pastor returned, and was scarce sat down to breakfast, when a message came to hurry him to come over to pray with the smith, who had been suddenly taken ill, and who died next day.” \*

*Fiery and meteorous exhalations*, shooting through the lower regions of the air, and sinking into the ground, were also deemed predictive of death. The individual was pointed out by these fires either falling on his lands or garden, or by gleaming with a lurid light over the family burying-place. Appearances of this kind were called *tomb-fires* by the Scandinavians, and *tan-we* by the Welsh, who believed that no freeholder died without a meteor having been seen to sparkle and vanish on his estate. In fact, as Shakspeare has expressed it, there could happen

“ No natural exhalations in the sky :”

but were considered as

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\* Grant's Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland, vol. i. p. 259—261.



————— “prodigies, and signs,  
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven.” \*

12 The idea that *sudden and fearful noises* are frequently heard before death takes place, and are indications of such an event, was very common at the period of which we are writing, both on the continent and in this country. “It happeneth many times,” says the English Lavaterus, “that when men lye sicke of some deadly disease, there is something heard going in the chamber, like as the sicke men were wonte, when they were in good health: yea and the sicke parties themselves, do many times heare the same, and by and by gesse what wil come to passe. And divers times it commeth to passe, that when some of our acquaintaunce or friends lye a dying, albeit they are many miles off, yet there are some great stirrings or noises heard. Sometimes we think that the house will fall on our heads, or that some massie and waightie thing falleth downe throughout all the house, rendring and making a disordered noise: and shortlie within few monthes after, we understande that those things happened, the very same houre that our friends departed in. There be some men of whose stocke none doth dye, but that they observe and marke some signes and tokens going before: as that they heare the dores and windowes open and shut, that some thing runneth up the staires, or walketh up and downe the house, or doth some one or other such like thing.

“There was a certain parishe priest, a very honest and godly man, whom I knewe well, who in the plague time, could tell before hand, when any of his parishe should dye. For in the night time he heard a noise over his bed, like as if one had throwne downe a sacke full of corne from his shoulders: which when he heard he would say: Nowe an other biddeth me farewell. After it was day, he used to inquire who died that night, or who was taken with the plague, to the end he might comfort and strengthen them, according to the duty of a good pastour.

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 459.

“ In Abbeyes, the Monks, servaunts or any other falling sicke, many have heard in the night, preparation of chests for them, in such sorte as the coffin makers did afterwards prepare in deede.

“ In some country villages, when one is at death's dore, many times there are some heard in the evening, or in the night, digging a grave in the Churcheyarde, and the same the next day is so found digged, as these men did heare before.” \*

The next class of superstitions which we shall notice in this chapter, is that depending on CHARMS and SPELLS, a fertile source of knavery and credulity, and which has been chiefly exercised, in our poet's time and since, by old women. Of this occupation, and its attendant folly and imposition, the bard has given us a sketch, in his *Merry Wives of Windsor*, in the person of the *Old Woman of Brentford*, who is declared by *Ford* to be “ a witch, a quean, an old cozening quean ! — We are simple men ; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of *fortune-telling*. She works by *charms*, by *spells*, by the figure, and such daubery as this is ; beyond our element : we know nothing.” †

That women of this description, or as Scot has delineated them, in one instance, indeed, deviating from the *portly* form of Shakspeare's cunning Dame, “ *leane, hollow-eied, old, beetle browed women* ‡,” were, as dealers in charms, spells and amulets, a very numerous tribe, in the days of Elizabeth and James, we have every reason to believe, from contemporary evidence ; but it appears that the trade of *fortune-telling* was then, as now, chiefly exercised by the wandering horde of *gipsies*, to whose name and characteristic knavery, our great poet alludes, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where the Roman complains that Cleopatra,

“ Like a right *gipsy*, hath, at *fast and loose*,  
Beguil'd him to the very heart of loss.” §

Of this wily people, of the juggle referred to in these lines, and of

\* Of Ghostes and Spirites, p. 77—79.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 169. Act iv. sc. 2.

‡ Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 279.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 230. Act iv. sc. 10.



their profession of fortune-telling, Scot thus speaks in his thirteenth book : — “ The AEGYPTIANS juggling witchcraft or sortilegie standeth much in *fast or loose*, whereof though I have written somewhat generallie already (p. 197), yet having such opportunitie I will here shew some of their particular feats ; not treating of their common tricks which is so tedious, nor of their *fortune-telling* which is so impious ; and yet both of them meere cousenages.”\* He then describes two games of *fast and loose* ; one with a handkerchief, and the other with whip cords and beads ; but as these much resemble the modern trick of *pricking at the belt or girdle*, explained by Sir J. Hawkins, in a note on the passage just quoted from our poet, it will not be necessary to notice them further in this place.

7 To *palmistry*, indeed, or the *art of Divination by the lines of the hand*, Shakspeare has allotted a great part of the second scene, in the first act, of *Antony and Cleopatra*, no doubt induced to this by the topographical situation of the opening characters, the play commencing at Alexandria in Egypt.

He has also occasionally adverted in other dramas to the multitude of *charms, spells, and periapts* which were in use in his time ; and he makes La Pucelle, in accordance with the necromantic powers attributed to her, solemnly invoke their assistance —

“ Now help, ye charming spells, and periapts ;” †

but as, to adopt the expression of Scot, he who “ should go about to recite all charmes, would take an infinite worke in hand ‡,” we shall confine ourselves to an enumeration, from this scarce and curious writer, of the evils and the powers, against, and for, which, these charms, were sought ; and shall then add a few specimens of their nature, force, and composition. It appears that they were eagerly enquired after in the first place against burning, drowning, pestilence, sword,

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\* Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 336.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xiii. p. 152. First Part of King Henry VI. act v. sc. 3.

‡ Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 279.

and famine, against thieves, spirits, witches, and diseases, and of the last class, especially against the venom of serpents, scorpions and other reptiles, the epilepsy, the king's evil, and the bite of a mad dog; and in the second, to enable the wearer to release a woman in travail, to conjure a thorn out of any member, or a bone out of the throat, to open all locks and doors, to know what is said and done behind our backs, to endure the severest tortures without shrinking, &c. &c.

One of the most efficacious of these charms, was a periapt or tablet, called an *Agnus Dei*. This, which was ordered to be constantly worn round the neck, consisted of a little cake, having the impression of a lamb carrying a flag on one side, and Christ's head on the other; and in the centre a concavity sufficiently large to contain the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, written on fine paper, in a very small character. It was a spell potent to protect the wearer against thunder and lightning, fire and water, sin, pestilence, and the perils of childbirth. \*

A charm against shot, or a waistcoat of proof, was thus to be obtained:—"On Christmas daie at night, a thread must be sponne of flax, by a little virgine girle, in the name of the divell: and it must be by hir woven, and also wrought with the needle. In the brest or forepart thereof must be made with needle worke two heads; on the head at the right side must be a hat, and a long beard; the left head must have on a crowne, and it must be so horrible, that it maie resemble Belzebub, and on each side of the wastcote must be made a crosse." †

That some of these spells, however, were not carried into execution with quite so much ease, as the two we have just transcribed, will be evident from the directions annexed to the following, entitled a *charm for one possessed*: "The possessed bodie must go upon his or hir knees to the church, how farre soever it be off from their lodging; and so must creepe without going out of the waie, being the common

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\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 290. 270.

† Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 231.



high waie, in that sort, how fowle and durtie soever the same be; or whatsoever lie in the waie, not shunning anie thing whatsoever, untill he come to the church, where he must heare masse devoutlie, and then followeth recoverie." \*

It appears, notwithstanding, that, even among the old women of the sixteenth century, there could be found some who, while they profited by, could, at the same time, despise, the credulity of their neighbours. "An old woman," says Scot, "that healed all diseases of cattell (for the which she never tooke any reward but a penie and a loafe) being seriouslie examined by what words she brought these things to passe, confessed that after she had touched the sicke creature, she alwaies departed immediatlíe; saíeng :

" My loafe in my lap,  
my penie in my pursse;  
Thou art never the better,  
and I am never the wursse." †

The same author, after relating the terrible curse or charm of St. Adelbert against thieves, facetiously adds, — "But I will answer this cruell cursse with another cursse farre more mild and civill, performed by as honest a man (I dare saie) as he that made the other. —

"So it was, that a certeine sir JOHN, with some of his companie, once went abroad a jetting, and in a moone light evening robbed a millers weire, and stole all his éeles. The poore miller made his mone to sir John himselfe, who willed him to be quiet; for he would so cursse the theefe, and all his confederates, with bell, booke and candell, that they should have small joy of their fish. And therefore the next sundaie, sir John got him to the pulpit, with his surplisse on his backe, and his stole about his necke, and pronounced these words following in the audience of the people.

All you that have stolne the miller's eeles,  
*Laudate Dominum de cœlis,*

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\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 247.

† Ibid. p. 245.

And all they that have consented thereto,  
*Benedicamus Domino.*

So (saith he) there is sauce for your éeles my maisters." \*

A third portion of the popular creed may be considered as including the various kinds of superstitious CURES, PREVENTATIVES, and SYMPATHIES; a species of credulity which has suffered little diminution even in the present day; for, though the materials selected for the purpose be different, the folly and the fraud are the same. Instead of animal magnetism and metallic tractors, the public faith, in the days of Shakespeare, rested, with implicit confidence, on the virtues supposed to be inherent in bones, precious stones, sympathetic signs, powders, &c.; and the poet, accordingly, has occasionally introduced imagery founded on these imaginary qualities. Thus, in the *Merchant of Venice*, the high value which Shylock places on his *turquoise* ring, was derived from this source, the turquoise or Turkey-stone, being considered as inestimable for its properties of indicating the health of the wearer by the increase or decrease of its colour, and for its protective power in shielding him from enmity and peril. That this was the cause of Shylock's deep regret for the loss of his ring, will appear probable from the more direct intimations of his contemporaries, Jonson and Drayton; the former, in his *Sejanus*, remarking of two parasites, that they would,

" — true, as turkoise in the dear lord's ring,  
 Look well or ill with him." †

and the latter declaring, that

" The turkesse, ——— who haps to wear,  
 Is often kept from peril." ‡

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\* Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 265, 266.

† See Whalley's Works of Ben Jonson.

‡ Chalmers's Poets, vol. iv. p. 465.



A more distinct allusion to the sanative virtue of precious stones, is to be found in the celebrated simile in *As You Like It*:

“ Sweet are the uses of adversity;  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.” \*

This stone or jewel was supposed to secure the possessor from the effects of poison, and to be, likewise, a sovereign remedy for the stone.

These important effects are ascribed to it by numerous writers of Shakspeare's time, — by Gesner †; by Batman ‡; by Maplett §; by Fenton ||; by Lupton ¶; by Topsell, and, subsequently, by Fuller. <sup>1</sup> It even formed, very early indeed, a part of medical treatment; for Lloyd, in his *Treasure of health*, recommends its exhibition for the stone, and orders it, after having been *stamp't*, to be “geven to the pacyent to drinke in warme wine.” <sup>2</sup>

To the *Bezoar* stone also was attributed great potency in expelling the plague and other pestilential diseases; and Gesner has given it an origin even more marvellous than the cures for which it has been celebrated; “when the hart is sick,” says he, “and hath eaten many serpents for his recoverie, he is brought unto so great a heate, that he hasteth to the water, and there covereth his body unto the very eares and eyes, at which time distilleth many teares from which the (*Bezoar*) stone is gendered.” <sup>3</sup>

The *Belemnites* or hag-stones, perforated flints hung up at the bed's head, to prevent the night-mare, or in stables to secure the horses

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 41. Act ii. sc. 1.

† De Quadrap. Ovip., p. 65.

‡ Batman uppon Bartholome his booke De proprietatibus rerum, 1582, fol. article Botrax.

§ A Green Forest, or a Natural History, 1567.

|| Secrete Wonders of Nature, 4to. 1569.

¶ First Book of Notable Things, 4to.

<sup>1</sup> Topsell's History of Serpents, 1608. fol., p. 188. and Fuller's Church History, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Printed by Copland, but without date, 12mo.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Batman on Bartholome, L. xviii. c. 30.

from being hag-ridden, and their manes elf-knotted, were, at this period, in common use. To one of the superstitious evils against which it was held as a protective, Shakspeare alludes, in his *Romeo and Juliet*, where Mercutio exclaims —

—— “ This is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night.” \*

“ It was believed,” remarks Mr. Douce, commenting on this passage, “ that certain malignant spirits whose delight was to wander in groves and pleasant places, assumed occasionally the likenesses of women clothed in white ; that in this character they sometimes haunted stables in the night-time, carrying in their hands tapers of wax, which they dropped on the horses’ manes, thereby plaiting them in inextricable knots, to the great annoyance of the poor animals and vexation of their masters. These hags are mentioned in the works of William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris in the thirteenth century. There is a very uncommon old print by Hans Burgmair relating to this subject. A witch enters the stable with a lighted torch ; and, previously to the operation of entangling the horse’s mane, practises her enchantments on the groom, who is lying asleep on his back, and apparently influenced by the night-mare.” †

The most copious account of the preservative and curative virtues which credulity has ascribed to precious stones, is to be drawn from the pages of Reginald Scot, who appears faithfully and minutely to have recorded the superstitions of his day. “ An Agat (they saie) hath vertue against the biting of scorpions or serpents. It is written (but I will not stand to it) that it maketh a man eloquent, and procureth the favour of princes ; yea, that the fume thereof dooth turn awaie tempests. Alectorius is a stone about the bignesse of a beane, as cleere as the christall, taken out of a cocks bellie which hath been gelt or made a capon foure yeares. If it be held in ones mouth, it assuageth

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 59. Act i. sc. 4.

† Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 180, 181,



thirst, it maketh the husband to love the wife, and the bearer invincible:—Chelidonium is a stone taken out of a swallowe, which cureth melancholie: howbeit, some authors saie, it is the hearbe whereby the swallowes recover the sight of their yoong, even if their eies be picked out with an instrument. Geranites is taken out of a crane, and Draconites out of a dragon. But it is to be noted, that such stones must be taken out of the bellies of the serpents, beasts, or birds, (wherein they are) whiles they live: otherwise, they vanish awaie with the life, and so they reteine the vertues of those starres under which they are. Amethysus maketh a droonken man sober, and refresheth the wit. The corall preserveth such as beare it from fascination or bewitching, and in this respect they are hanged about children's necks. But from whence that superstition is derived, and who invented the lie, I knowe not: but I see how redie the people are to give credit thereunto, by the multitude of coralls that waie employed. Heliotropius stancheth bloud, driveth awaie poisons, preserveth health: yea, and some write that it provoketh raine, and darkeneth the sunne, suffering not him that beareth it to be abused. Hyacinthus dooth all that the other dooth, and also preserveth from lightening. Dinothera hanged about the necke, collar, or yoke of any creature, tameth it presentlie. A Topase healeth the lunatike person of his passion of lunacie. Aitites, if it be shaken, soundeth as if there were a little stone in the bellie thereof: it is good for the falling sicknesse, and to prevent untimelie birth. Chalcedonium maketh the bearer luckie in lawe, quickeneth the power of the bodie, and is of force also against the illusions of the divell, and phantasticall cogitations arising of melancholie. Corneolus mitigateth the heate of the mind, and qualifieth malice, it stancheth bloudie fluxes. Iris helpeth a woman to speedie deliverance, and maketh rainebowes to appeere. A Sapphire preserveth the members, and maketh them livelie, and helpeth agues and gowts, and suffereth not the bearer to be afraid: it hath vertue against venome, and staieth bleeding at the nose, being often put thereto. A Smarag is good for the eiesight, and maketh one rich and eloquent. Mephis (as Aaron and Hermes report out of



Albertus Magnus) being broken into powder, and droonke with water, maketh insensibilitie of torture. Heereby you may understand, that as God hath bestowed upon these stones, and such other like bodies, most excellent and woonderfull vertues: so according to the abundance of humane superstitions and follies; manie ascribe unto them either more virtues, or others than they have."\*

This passage has been closely imitated by Drayton, in the ninth Nymphal of his Muse's Elysium†; he has made, however, some additions to the catalogue, one of which we have already noticed, and another will be shortly quoted.

Virtues of a kind equally miraculous were attributed to bones and horns; thus Scot tells us, that a bone taken out of a carp's head staunches blood; that the bone in a hare's foot mitigates the cramp, and that the unicorn's horn is inestimable‡; and were we to enumerate the wonders performed by herbs, we might fill a volume. Many of them, indeed, were considered of such potency as to render the persons who rightly used them, either invisible or invulnerable, and, therefore, to those who were engaged to fight a legal duel, an oath was administered, purporting "that they had *ne charme, ne herbe of vertue*" about them.

Several diseases were held to be incurable, by ordinary means; such as wens, warts, the king's evil, agues, rickets, and ruptures; and the remedies which were adopted present a most deplorable instance of human folly. Tumours were to be dispelled by stroking them nine times with a dead man's hand, and the evil by the royal touch; a miraculous power supposed to have been first exercised by Edward the Confessor, and to have been since hereditary in the royal line, at least to the period of the decease of Queen Anne. Of the discharge of this important function by the Confessor, and of its regal descent, our poet has left us a pretty accurate description:—

\* Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 293—295.

† Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 465.

‡ Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 305.



" *Malcolm.* ——— Comes the king forth, I pray you?

*Doctor.* Ay, Sir: there are a crew of wretched souls,  
That stay his cure: their malady convinces  
The great assay of art; but, at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,  
They presently amend.

*Macduff.* What's the disease he means?

*Mal.* 'Tis call'd the evil:

A most miraculous work in this good king;  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;  
Hanging a golden stamp\* about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction."†

That Shakspeare had frequently witnessed Queen Elizabeth's exercise of this extraordinary gift, is very probable; for it appears from Laneham, that even on her visits to her nobility, she was in the habit of exerting this sanative power. In his *Account of the Entertainment at Kenelworth Castle*, he records "by her highness accustomed mercy and charitee, nyne cured of the peynful and dangerous diseaz called the King's Evil, for that kings and queens of this realm without oother medsin (than by touching and prayer) only doo it."‡

Most of the superstitious cures for warts and agues remain as articles of popular credulity; but the mode of removing ruptures and the rickets which prevailed at this period, and for some centuries before, is now nearly, if not altogether extinct. A young tree was split

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\* This *golden stamp* was the coin called an angel, from the figure which it bore, and was worth ten shillings.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 242, 243. Macbeth, act iv. sc. 3.

‡ Nichols's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i.: and Scot, speaking of the pretensions of the French monarchs to cure the evil, observes of Elizabeth's practice, that "if the French king use it no woorsse than our Princesse doth, God will not be offended thereat: for hir majestie onelie useth godlie and divine praier, with some almes, and reffereth the cure to God and to the physician," p. 304., a report which reflects great credit on her majesty's judgment and good sense.

longitudinally, and the diseased child, being stripped naked, was passed, with the head foremost, thrice through the fissure. The wounded tree was then drawn together with a cord so as to unite it perfectly, and as the tree healed, the child was to acquire health and strength. The same result followed if the child crept through a stone perforated by some operation of Nature; of stones of this kind there are some instances in Cornwall, and Mr. Borlase tells us, in his History of that County, that there was one of this description in the parish of Marden, which had a perforation through it fourteen inches in diameter, and was celebrated for its cures on those who ventured, under these complaints, to travel through its healing aperture.

The doctrine of *sympathetic* indications and cures was very prevalent during the era of Elizabeth and James, and is repeatedly insisted upon by the writers of that age. One of the most generally credited of these was, that a murdered body bled upon the touch or approach of the murderer; an idea which has not only been adopted by our elder bards as poetically striking, but has been adduced, as a truth, by some of our very grave writers in prose. Among the Dramatists it will be sufficient to produce Shakspeare, who represents the corpse of Henry the Sixth as bleeding on the approach of the Tyrant Richard:—

“ O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry’s wounds  
Open their congeal’d mouths, and bleed afresh!  
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity;  
For ’tis thy presence that exhales this blood  
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;  
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,  
Provokes this deluge most unnatural:” \*

and Drayton seems to have been a firm believer in the same preternatural effect; for he informs us in his forty sixth *Idea*, that,

“ In making trial of a murther wrought,  
If the vile actors of the heinous deed,

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xiv. p. 285. Richard the Third, act i. sc. 2.



Near the dead body happily be brought,  
 Oft't hath been prov'd the breathless corps will bleed." \*

Of the prose authorities, besides Lupton, and Sir Kenelm Digby mentioned in the notes of the Variorum Edition of our author, Lavaterus, Reginald Scot, and King James may be quoted, as reposing an implicit faith in the miracle. The *first* of these writers tells us, in his English dress, of 1572, that "some men beeing slayne by theeves, when the theeves come to the dead body, by and by there gusheth out freshe blood, or else there is declaration by other tokens, that the theefe is there present;" and he then adds, "touching these and other such marvellous things there might be many histories and testimonies alleaged. But whosoever readeth this booke, may call to their remembraunce, that they have seene these and suche like things themselves, or that they have heard them of their freends and acquaintance and of such as deserve sufficient credit."† The *second*, in 1584, justifying what he terms common experience, says, "I have heard by credible report, and I have read many grave authors constantlie affirme, that the wound of a man murthered reneweth bleeding; at the presence of a deere freend, or of a mortall enimie ‡;" and the third, in 1603, asserts, that "in a secret murther, if the dead carkasse bee at any time thereafter handled by the murtherer, it will gush out of bloud, as if the bloud were crying to the heaven for revenge of the murtherer, God having appointed that secret supernaturall signe, for triall of that secret unnaturall crime." §

The influence of sympathy or *affection* as it was termed, at the period of which we are writing, over the passions and feelings of the human mind, is curiously, though correctly exemplified by the poet, in the character of Shylock, who tells the Duke —

\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 405.

† Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght, p. 80.

‡ Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 303.

§ The Workes of the Most High and Mighty Prince James, fol. edit. 1616. p. 136. The *Dæmonologie* was first printed at Edinburgh in 1597, and next in London, 1603, 4to.

" Some men there are, love not a gaping pig;  
Some, that are mad, if they behold a cat;  
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,  
Cannot contain their urine; for *affection*,  
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood  
Of what it likes and loaths." \*

2. Another sympathy mentioned by Shakspeare, but of a nature wholly superstitious, relates to the Mandrake, a vegetable, the root of which was supposed to be endued with animal life, and to shriek so horribly when drawn out of the ground, as to occasion madness, and even death, in those who made the attempt:—

————— " What with loathsome smells,  
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,  
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad;  
O! if I wake, shall I not be distraught?" †

exclaims Juliet; and Suffolk, in King Henry the Sixth, declares that every joint of his body should curse and ban his enemies,

" Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan." ‡

To avoid these dreadful effects, it was the custom of those who collected this root, to compel some animal to be the instrument of extraction, and consequently the object of punishment. " They doe affyrme," says Bulleine, " that this herbe (the Mandragora) commeth of the seede of some convicted dead men: and also without the death of some lyvinge thinge it cannot be drawnen out of the earth to man's use. Therefore they did tye some dogge or other lyving beast unto the roote thereof wyth a corde, and digged the earth in compasse round about, and in the meane tyme stopp'd their own eares for feare of the terrible shriek and cry of this Mandrack. In whych cry it doth not only dye itselife, but the feare thereof killeth the dogge or beast which pulleth it out of the earth." §

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 344. Merchant of Venice, act iv. sc. 1.

† Ibid. vol. xx. p. 208. Romeo and Juliet, act iv. sc. 3.

‡ Ibid. vol. xiii. p. 297. Act iii. sc. 2.

§ Bulwarke of Defence against Sickness, fol. 1579, p. 41.



One of the most fantastic sympathies which yet lingers in the popular creed, is founded on the idea that when a person is seized with a sudden shivering, some one is walking over his future grave. "Probably," remarks Mr. Grose, "all persons are not subject to this sensation; otherwise the inhabitants of those parishes, whose burial grounds lie in the common foot-path, would live in one continual fit of shaking." \*

Of all the modes of sympathetic credulity, however, none was more prevalent in the reign of James the First, than that which pretended to the cure of wounds and diseases; no stronger proof, indeed, can be given of the credulity of that age, than that Bacon was a believer in the sympathetic cure of warts †, and, with James and his court, in the efficacy of Sir Kenelm Digby's sympathetic powder. To this far-famed medicine, the secret of which King James obtained from Sir Kenelm, it is said, by the Knight himself, in his Discourse on Sympathy, that Mr. James Howel, the well-known author of the Letters, was indebted for a cure, when his hand was severely wounded in endeavouring to part two of his friends engaged in a duel. The King, out of regard to Howel, sent him his own surgeon; but a gangrene being apprehended, from the violence of the inflammation, the sufferer was induced to apply to Sir Kenelm, of whose mode of treatment he had heard the most wonderful accounts.

"I asked him," relates Digby, "for any thing that had the blood upon it; so he presently sent for his garter, wherewith his hand was first bound; and as I called for a bason of water, as if I would wash my hands, I took a handfull of powder of vitriol, which I had in my study, and presently dissolved it. As soon as the bloody garter was brought me, I put it within the bason, observing in the interim, what Mr. Howel did, who stood talking with a gentleman in a corner of my chamber, not regarding at all what I was doing; but he started suddenly as if he had found some strange alteration in himself. I asked

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\* Grose's Provincial Glossary, p. 291.

† Vide Bacon's Natural History, Century x. No. 997, 998.



him what he ailed? ‘ I know not what ailes me ; but I finde that I feel no more pain. Methinks that a pleasing kinde of freshnesse, as it were a wet cold napkin, did spread over my hand, which hath taken away the inflammation that tormented me before.’ I reply’d, ‘ Since then that you feel already so good effect of my medicament, I advise you to cast away all your playsters ; only keep the wound clean, and in a moderate temper betwixt heat and cold.’ This was presently reported to the Duke of Buckingham, and a little after to the king, who were both very curious to know the circumstance of the businesse, which was, that after dinner I took the garter out of the water, and put it to dry before a great fire. It was scarce dry, but Mr. Howel’s servant came running that his master felt as much burning as ever he had done, if not more : for the heat was such as if his hand were twixt coles of fire. I answered, although that had happened at present, yet he should find ease in a short time ; for I knew the reason of this new accident, and would provide accordingly ; for his master should be free from that inflammation, it may be before he could possibly return to him : but in case he found no ease, I wished him to come presently back again ; if not, he might forbear coming. Thereupon he went ; and at the instant I did put again the garter into the water, thereupon he found his master without any pain at all. To be brief, there was no sense of pain afterward ; but within five or six dayes the wounds were cicatrized, and entirely healed.” \*

To this marvellous cure, which may in truth be attributed to the dismission of the plasters, we may add that a similar sanative and sympathetic power was conceived to subsist between the wounds and the instrument which inflicted them. Thus anointing the weapon with a salve, or stroking it in a peculiar manner, had an immediate effect on the wounded person. “ They can remedie,” says Scot, “ anie stranger, and him that is absent, with that *verie sword* wherewith they are wounded. Yea, and that which is beyond all

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\* Digby’s Discourse upon the Sympathetic Powder, p. 6.



admiration, if they stroke the sworde upwards with their fingers, the partie shall feelee no paine: whereas if they drawe their finger downewards thereupon, the partie wounded shall feelee intollerable paine." \*

Independent of the superstitions which we have thus classed under distinct heads, there remain several to be noticed, not clearly referrible to any part of the above arrangement; but which cannot with propriety be omitted. These may, therefore, be collected under the term MISCELLANEOUS, which will be found to include many curious particulars, in no slight degree illustrative of the subject under consideration.

In the *Tempest*, towards the close of the fourth act, the poet represents Prospero and Ariel setting on spirits, in the shape of hounds, to hunt Stephano and Trinculo, while, at the same time, a noise of hunters is heard. † This species of diabolical or spectral chase was a popular article of belief, and is mentioned or alluded to in many of the numerous books which were written, during this period, on devils and spectres. Lavaterus, treating of the various modes in which spirits act, says, "heereunto belongeth those things which are reported touching the *chasing or hunting of Divels*, and also of the daunces of dead men, which are of sundrie sortes. I have heard of some which have avouched, that they have seene them ‡;" and in a translation from the French of Peter de Loier's *Treatise of Spectres*, published in 1605, a chase of this kind is mentioned under the appellation of *Arthur's Chace*, "which many," observes this writer, "believe to be in France, and think that it is a kennel of black dogs, followed by unknown huntsmen, with an exceeding great sound of horns, as if it was a very hunting of some wild beast." §

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\* Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 280.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 146.

‡ Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght, p. 96.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 146. note 3.

Of a chase of this supernatural description, Boccacio, in the fourteenth century, made an admirable use in his terrific tale of Theodore and Honoria; a narrative which has received new charms and additional horrors from the masterly imitation of Dryden; and in our own days the same impressive superstition has been productive of a like effect in the spirited ballad of Burger.

23 The hell-hounds of Shakspeare appear to be sufficiently formidable; for, not merely commissioned to hunt their victims, they are ordered, likewise, as goblins, to

“grind their joints  
With dry convulsions; shorten up their sinews  
With aged cramps; and more pinch-spotted make them,  
Than pard, or cat o'mountain.

Hark, (*exclaims Ariel*) they roar.

*Prospero.* Let them be hunted soundly.” \*

The punishments which our poet has assigned to sinners in the infernal regions, are most probably founded on the fictions of the monks, who, not content with the infliction of mere fire as a source of torment, condemn the damned to suffer the alternations of heat and cold; to experience the cravings of extreme hunger and thirst, and to be driven by whirlwinds through the immensity of space. In correspondence with these legendary horrors, are the descriptions attributed to Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, and to the Ghost in *Hamlet*: —

“*Claudio.* Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot:  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside,  
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 147.



Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
Imagine howling ! — 'tis too horrible !" \*

————— " I am thy father's spirit;  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;  
And, for the day, *confined to fast in fires*,  
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,  
Are burnt and purg'd away." †

Imagery somewhat similar to this may be found in the vulgar Latin version of Job xxiv. 19. ‡, and in the Inferno and Purgatorio of Dante §; but Shakspeare had sufficient authorities in his own language. An old homily, quoted by Dr. Farmer, speaking of the pains of hell, says " the fyrste is fyre that ever brenneth, and never gyveth lighte; the seconde is passying cold, that yf a greate hylle of fyre were cast therein, it shold torne to yce ||;" and Chaucer, in his *Assemblie of Foules*, describing the situation of souls in hell, declares that

———— " breakers of the lawe, sothe to saine,  
And lickerous folke, after that they been dede  
*Shall whirle about the world*, alway in paine  
Till many a world be passed." ¶

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 303—305.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 78.

‡ " Ad nimium calorem transeat ab aquis nivium." In the paraphrase on Genesis, by Cedmon the Saxon poet, the same imagery may be found.

Of this venerable poet and monk, who flourished in the seventh century, Mr. Turner has given us a very interesting account, together with a version of some parts of his paraphrase. One of these is a picture of the infernal regions, in which he says, —

" There comes at last  
the eastern wind,  
the *cold frost*  
mingling with the fires."

Hist. of the Anglo-Saxons, 2d edit.  
4to. 1807, vol. ii. p. 309. et seq.

§ Infer. c. iii. 86. Purgat. c. iii. 31.

|| Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 305, note 9.

¶ Chalmers's English Poets, vol. i. p. 330.

The same doctrine is taught in that once popular and curious old work *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which so frequently issued from the presses of Wynkyn De Worde, Pynson, and Julian Notary. Among the torments of the damned, the first enumerated

——— “ is fire so hote to rekenne  
That no manere of thyng may slekenne,  
The secunde is colde as seith some  
That no hete of fire may over come ;”

and Lazarus, describing the punishment of the ENVIOUS, says, — “ I have seen in hell a flood frozen as ice, wherein the *envious* men and women were plunged unto the navel ; and then suddenly came over them a right cold and a great wind, that grieved and pained them right sore, and when they would evite and eschew the wonderful blasts of the wind, they plunged into water with great shouts and cries, lamentable to hear \* ;” and again in the eighteenth chapter of the same work, it is related, as the reward of them that keep the ten commandments of the Devil, that

——— “ a *great froste* in a water rounes  
And after a *bytter wynde* comes  
Whiche gothe through the soules with yre.”

In the *Songes and Sonnets*, also, by Lord Surrey, and others, which were first published in 1557, the pains of hell are depicted as partaking of the like vicissitude :—

“ The soules that lacked grace  
Which lye in bitter paine,  
Are not in suche a place,  
As foolish folke do faine ;

Tormented all with *fyre*,  
And boyle in leade againe —

Then cast in *frozen pites*,  
To *freze* there certein howres.” †

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\* Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 534. 598.

† Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 424.



Hunger and thirst, as forming part of the sufferings of the damned, are alluded to by Chaucer in his *Parson's Tale*\*, and by Nash in one of his numerous pamphlets: "Whether," says he, speaking of hell, "it be a place of horror, stench, and darkness, where men see meat, but can get none, and are ever thirsty." †

Heywood in his *Hierarchie of Angels* ‡, and Milton in his *Paradise Lost*, have adopted Claudio's description of the infernal abode with regard to the interchange of heat and cold; the picture which the latter has drawn completely fills up the outline of Shakspeare:—

" Beyond ——— a frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail ———  
Thither by harpy-footed furies hal'd,  
At certain revolutions, all the damn'd  
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,  
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice  
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine  
Immovable, infix'd, and frozen round,  
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire." §

The Platonic doctrine or superstition relative to the harmony of the spheres, and of the human soul, was a favourite embellishment, both in prose and poetry, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Spenser, Shakspeare, Hooker, Milton, have all adopted it as a mode of illustration, and it forms, in the works of our great Dramatist, one of his most splendid and beautiful passages:

" How sweet the moon-light sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of musick  
Creep in our ears; soft stillness, and the night,  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

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\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. i. p. 149.—"The mesere of helle shalbe in defaute of mete and drink. For God sayth thus by Moyses: They shal be wasted with honger, &c."

† Pierce Penniless, his Supplication to the Devil, 1595.

‡ Folio, 1635. p. 345.

§ *Paradise Lost*, book ii. l. 587, et seq.

Sit, Jessica: Look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;  
*There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st,*  
*But in his motion like an angel sings,*  
*Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins:*  
*Such harmony is in immortal souls;*  
*But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay*  
*Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."* \*

The opinion of Plato, as expressed in the tenth book of his *Republic* † and in his *Timæus*, represents the music of the spheres as so rapid, sweet, and variously inflected, as to exceed all power in the human ear to measure its proportions, and consequently it is not to be heard of man, while resident in this fleshly mould. The same species of harmony is averred by Hooker ‡ and Shakspeare to reside in the human soul; but, says the latter, "whilst this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close this musick in, we cannot hear it:" that is, whilst the soul is immured in the body, it is neither conscious of its own harmony, nor of that existing in the spheres; but no sooner shall it be freed from this incumbrance, and become a *pure spirit*, than it shall be sensible both to its *own concord of sweet sounds*, and to that *diapason* or concentus which is addressed by the nine muses or syrens to the Supreme Being,

"That undisturbed song of *pure concent*,  
Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne,  
To *Him* that sits thereon." §

Of the various superstitions relative to the *Moon*, which prevailed in the days of Shakspeare, a few are still retained. The most common is that founded on the idea of a human creature being im-

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 374.

† Ex *πασῶν* δε, &c. De Republ. lib. x. p. 520, Lugd. 1590. Vide Todd's Milton, vol. vii. p. 53.

‡ "Such, notwithstanding, is the force there of (musical harmony), and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think, that the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony."—Fifth Book of Ecclesiastical Polity, published singly in 1597.

§ Todd's Milton, vol. vii. p. 53.



prisoned in this beautiful planet. The culprit was generally supposed to be the sinner recorded in Numbers, chap. xv. v. 32., who was found gathering sticks upon the sabbath day; a crime to which Chaucer has added the iniquity of theft; for he describes this singular inhabitant as

“ Bearing a bush of thornes on his backe,  
Which for his *theft* might clime no ner the heven.” \*

The Italians, however, appropriate this luminary for the residence of Cain, and one of their early poets even speaks of the planet under the term of *Caino e le spine*. † Shakspeare, with his usual attention to propriety of character, attributes a belief in this superstition to the monster Caliban :

“ *Calib.* Hast thou not dropped from heaven ?  
*Steph.* Out o’the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man in the moon, when time was.  
*Cal.* I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee;  
My mistress shewed me thee, thy dog and bush.” ‡

The influence of the moon over diseases bodily and intellectual; its virtue in all magical rites; its appearances as predictive of evil and good, and its power over the weather and over many of the minor concerns of life, such as the gathering of herbs, the killing of animals for the table, &c. &c. were much more firmly and universally accredited in the sixteenth century than at present; although we must admit, that traces of all these credulities may still be found; and that in medical science, the doctrine of lunar influence still, and to a certain extent, perhaps with probability, exists.

Shakspeare addresses the moon as the “ sovereign mistress of true melancholy §;” tells us, that when “ she comes more near to the earth than she was wont,” she “ makes men mad || ;” and that, when she is

\* Chalmers’s English Poets, vol. i. p. 296. col. 1.

† Dante’s Inferno, cant. xx.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 89, 90.

§ Ibid. vol. xvii. p. 222. Antony and Cleopatra, act iv. sc. 9.

|| Ibid. vol. xix. p. 409. Othello, act v. sc. 2.

“pale in her anger — rheumatic diseases do abound.” \* He tells us, also, through the medium of Hecate, that

“ Upon the corner of the moon  
There hangs a vaporous drop profound”

of power to compel the obedience of infernal spirits †; and that its eclipses ‡, its sanguine colour §, and its apparent multiplication ||, are certain prognostics of disaster.

To kill hogs, to collect herbs, and to sow seed, when the moon was increasing, was deemed a most essential observance; the bacon was better, the plants more effective, and the crops more abundant in consequence of this attention. Implicit confidence was also placed in the new moon as a prognosticator of the weather, according to its position, or the curvature of its horns; and it was hailed by blessings and supplications; the women especially, both in England and Scotland, were accustomed to curtesy to the new moon, and on the first night of its appearance the unmarried part of the sex would frequently, sitting astride on a gate or stile, invoke its influence in the following curious terms: —

“ All hail to the Moon, all hail to thee,  
I prithee good Moon declare to me,  
This night who my husband shall be.”

The credulity of the country was particularly directed at this period, including the close of the sixteenth century, and the beginning of the seventeenth century, towards the numerous relations of the existence of MONSTERS of various kinds; and Shakspeare, who more than any other poet, availed himself of the superstitious follies of his time, hath repeatedly both introduced, and satirized, these objects, as articles of, and excitors of the popular belief. His Caliban, a monster

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 361. *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, act ii. sc. 2.

† Ibid. vol. x. p. 194. *Macbeth*, act iii. sc. 5.

‡ Ibid. vol. xvii. p. 195. 342. *Lear*, act i. sc. 2.; vol. xix. p. 499. *Othello*, act v. sc. 2.

§ Ibid. vol. xi. p. 83. *Richard the Second*, act ii. sc. 4.

|| Ibid. vol. x. p. 480. *K. John*, act iv. sc. 2.



of his own creation, and, poetically considered, one of the most striking products of his imagination, will be noticed at length in another place, and we shall here confine ourselves to his description of the monsters which, as objects of historical record, had lately become the theme of credulous wonder, and general speculation.

Othello, in his speech before the senators, familiarly alludes to

— “the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The *Anthropophagi*, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders :” \*

and Gonzaga, in the *Tempest*, exclaims :

“ Who would believe that there were mountaineers,  
Dewlapp’d like bulls, whose throats had hanging at them  
Wallets of flesh ? or that there were such men,  
Whose heads stood in their breasts.” †

These monsters, and many others, which had been described in the editions of Maundeville’s *Travels*, published by Wynkyn De Worde and Pynson in 1499—1503, &c. were revived, with fresh claims to belief, by the voyagers and natural historians of the poet’s age. In 1581, Professor Batman printed his “Doome, warning all men to the judgements,” in which not only the *Anthropophagi*, who eat man’s flesh, are mentioned, but various other races, such as the *Æthiopes* with four eyes, the *Hippopodes*, with their nether parts like horses, the *Arimaspi* with one eye in the forehead, &c. &c., and to these he adds “men called *Monopoli*, who have no head, but a face in their breaste.” ‡ In 1596 these marvels were corroborated by Sir Walter Raleigh’s *Discoverie of Guiana* §, an empire, which, he affirms, was productive of a similar generation ; and Hackluyt, in 1598, tells us that, “on that branch which is called Caora, are a nation of a

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\* Reed’s *Shakspeare*, vol. xix. p. 271. † Ibid. vol. iv. p. 114.

‡ Doome, p. 389.

§ The *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana*, with a relation of the Great and Golden Citie of Manoa, which the Spaniards call El Dorado. Performed in 1595, by Sir W. Raleigh. Imprinted at London by Rob. Robinson, 1596.

people *whose heades appeare not above their shoulders*: they are reported to have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouthes in the middle of their breasts."

With the mere English scholar, classical authority was given to these tales by Philemon Holland's Translation of Pliny's Natural History in 1601, where are the following descriptions both of the *Anthropophagi* and of the men *whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders*: — "The Anthropophagi or eaters of man's flesh whom we have placed about the North pole, tenne daies journey by land above the river Borysthenes, use to drinke out of the sculs of men's heads, and to weare the scalpes, haire and all, in steed of mandellions or stomachers before their breasts." \* "The Blemmyi, by report, have no heads, but mouth and eies both in their breast †;" and again, "beyond these westward, some there bee without heads standing upon their neckes, who carrie eies in their shoulders." ‡

It is, also, very probable that the attention of Shakspeare was still further drawn to these headless monsters by the labours of the engraver; for in Este's edition of Maundeville's Travels, an attempt is made to delineate one of these deformities, who is represented with the eyes, nose, and mouth situated on the breast and stomach; and in a translation of Raleigh's Guiana into Latin, by Hulse, in 1599, a similar plate is given. §

That our author viewed this partiality in the public mind for wonders and strange spectacles, with a smile of contempt, and was willing to seize an opportunity for ridiculing the mania, appears evident from a passage in his *Tempest*, where Trinculo, discovering Caliban extended on the ground, supposes him to be a species of fish, and observes, "Were I in England now (as once I was) and had

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\* The Historie of the World. Commonly called, The Natural Historie of C. Plinius Secundus. Translated into English by Philemon Holland, Doctor in Physicke. London, printed by Adam Islip. 1601. vol. i. p. 154. book vii. chap. 2.

† Holland's Pliny, vol. i. p. 96. book v. chap. 8.

‡ Ibid. p. 156.

§ The title of this work is, *Brevis et admiranda Descriptio Regni Gvianæ, auri abundantissimi, in America*. It is accompanied by a map, engraved by *Hondius*, on which are drawn men hunting, with their heads beneath their shoulders.



but this *fish* painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver : there would this monster make a man ; any strange beast there makes a man : when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.” \*

*Wild Indians, curious fishes, and crocodiles*, seem to have been singularly numerous in London at this epoch, having been brought thither by several of our enterprising navigators ; and by those who crowded from every part of the country to view them, many superstitious marvels were connected with their natural history. Of *three or four savages* which Frobisher took in his first voyage, one, we are told, “ for very choler and disdain bit his tong in twaine within his mouth : notwithstanding he died not thereof, but lived untill he came in Englande, and then he died of colde, which he had taken at sea † ;” the survivors, there is every reason to suppose, were exhibited ; for in the year 1577, there was entered on the books of the Stationers’ Company, “ A description of the portrayture and shape of those strange kinde of people which the worthie Mr. Martin Fourbosier brought into England in Ao 1576 ‡ ;” and Mr. Chalmers relates, that “ Lord Southampton, and Sir Francis Gorges, engaging in voyages of discovery, sent out, in 1611, two vessels under the command of Harlie, and Nicolas, who sailed along the New England coast, where they were sometimes well, and often ill, received, by the natives ; and returned to England, in the same year, with *five savages*, on board. In 1614, Captain Smith carried out to New England one of those savages, named *Tantum* ; Captains Harlie and Hopson transported, in the same year, two others of those savages, called *Epenow*, and *Manawet* ; one of those savages adventured to the European continent ; and the *fifth Indian*, of whom no account is given, we may easily suppose died in London, and was exhibited for a show.” §

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 83. Act i. sc. 2.

† Frobisher’s *First Voyage for the Discoverie of Cataya*, 4to. 1578.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 83, note 9.

§ Chalmers’s Apology, p. 586.

We learn from a publication of Churchyard's in 1578, that Fro-bisher's crew found a "*straunge fish* dead, that had been caste from the sea on the shore, who had a boane in his head like an Unicorne, which they brought awaye, and presented to our Prince, when thei came home \*;" and from the Stationers' Books, that, in 1604, an account was printed "of a monstrous *fish*, that appeared in the form of a woman from her waist upward, seene in the sea."† That the credulity of the public in Elizabeth's days was remarkably great in swallowing the most marvellous details in natural history, is proved by a curious scene in the "City Match" of Jasper Mayne, which, though first acted in 1639, refers to the age of Elizabeth, as to a period fertile in these wondrous exhibitions. A set of knaves are described as *hanging out the picture of a strange fish*, which they affirm is the *fifth* they have shown; and the following dialogue takes place relative to the inscription on the place which included the monster: —

"*Holland.* Pray, can you read that? Sir, I warrant  
That tells where it was caught, and what fish 'tis.

*Plotwell.* *Within this place is to be seen,  
A wonderous fish. God save — the Queen.*

*Hol.* Amen! She is my customer, and I  
Have sold her bone-lace often.

*Bright.* Why the Queen? 'Tis writ the King.

*Plot.* That was to make the rhyme.

*Bright.* 'Slid, thou did'st read it as twere some picture of  
An *Elizabeth-fish*." ‡

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\* Prayse and Reporte of Maister Martyne Forboisher's Voyage to Meta Incognita, &c. bl. l. 12mo. 1578. Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 83. note 7.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 83. note 7. — The existence of *mermaids* has, within these few years, been asserted by numerous testimonies; some of which are so clear, minute, and respectable, as to stagger the most sceptical. It is not only possible, but from the evidence alluded to it appears indeed somewhat probable, that a creature partially resembling the human form exists in the ocean, and occasionally, though rarely, approaches so near the shore as to become an object of wonder and superstitious horror. The sea round the Isle of Man was formerly reputed to abound in these monsters, which were conceived to be of two kinds, the one malignant, the other benevolent and kind.

‡ Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 377, 378.



A boy is then introduced, who sings a song upon the fish, commencing with these lines :

“ We show no monstrous *crocodile*,  
Nor any prodigy of Nile;” \*

which again alludes to the monster-loving propensities of good Queen Bess's subjects ; for Batman in his work upon Bartholome, published in 1582, says,—“ Of late years there hath been brought into England, the cases or skinnes of such *crocodiles*, to be seene, and much money given for the sight thereof ; the policy of strangers,” he adds, in the spirit of Shakspeare, “ laugh at our folly, either that we are too wealthy, or else that we know not how to bestow our money †;” and Bullokar, in his *English Expositor* of 1616, confirms the charge by telling us, that a dead *crocodile*, “ but in perfect forme,” and nine feet long, had lately been exhibited in London, a fact to which he annexes the following tradition :—“ It is written,” he remarks, “ that he will weep over a man's head when he hath devoured the body, and then he will eat up the head too. Wherefore—crocodiles tears signifie such tears as are fained, and spent only with intent to deceive or doe harme.” ‡ Of this superstition Shakspeare has made a poetical use in two of his dramas : Margaret in *Henry VI.* Part 2. complains that Gloucester beguiles the king,

————— “ as the mournful *crocodile*  
With sorrow snares relenting passengers :” §

and Othello, execrating the supposed duplicity of Desdemona, exclaims,

“ If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a *crocodile*.” ||

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 379.

† Batman upon Bartholome, p. 359.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. p. 449. note 5.

§ Ibid. vol. xiii. p. 268. Act iii. sc. 1. || Ibid. vol. xix. p. 449.

Many superstitions relative to the DYING, existed at this time, among all ranks of people, and a few of these have been preserved by our poet. One of the most general was built on the belief, that Satan, or some of his infernal host, watched the death-bed of every individual, and, if impenitence or irreligion appeared, immediately took possession of the soul. The death-scene of Cardinal Beaufort is an admirable exemplification of this appalling idea; Henry is appealing to the Almighty in behalf of the agonised sinner, and utters the following pious petition: —

“ O thou eternal Mover of the heavens,  
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!  
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend  
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,  
And from his bosom purge this black despair!” \*

The powerful delineation of this scene from the pencil of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in which the “ meddling fiend ” is personified in all his terrors, must be considered in strict accordance with the credulity of the age; for “ in an ancient manuscript book of devotions,” relates Mr. Douce, “ written in the reign of Henry VI., there is a prayer addressed to Saint George, with the following very singular passage: ‘ Judge for me whan the moste hedyous and damnable dragons of helle shall be redy to take my poore soule and engloute it in to theyr infernall belyes †;’ ” and the books on demonology and spirits, written in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, clearly prove that this relic of popish superstition was still a portion of the popular creed.

Another singular conception was, that it was necessary in the agonies of death, to

“ Pluck — men's pillows from below their heads,” †

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xiii. p. 306. Act iii. sc. 3.

† Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 20.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. p. 135. Timon of Athens, act iv. sc. 3.



in order that they might die the easier ; a practice founded on the ridiculous supposition that, if pigeons' feathers formed a part of the materials of the pillow, it was impossible the sufferer should expire but in great misery, and that he would probably continue to struggle for a prodigious length of time in exquisite torture.

It was common at this period, and the practice, indeed, continued until the middle of the last century, to consider WELLS and FOUNTAINS as peculiarly sacred and holy, and to visit them as a species of pilgrimage, or for the healing virtues which superstition had fondly attributed to them. Many of these wells, which had been much frequented in London, during the days of Fitzstephen, were closed, or neglected, when Stowe wrote\* ; but in the *country* the habit of resorting to such springs, and for purposes similar to those which existed in papal times, was generally preserved. Bourne, who published in 1725, speaks in language peculiarly descriptive of this superstitious regard for wells and fountains, not only as it was observed in ancient times, but at the period in which he lived. " In the dark ages of popery," he says, " it was a custom, if any *well* had an awful situation, and was seated in some lonely melancholy vale ; if its water was clear and limpid, and beautifully margin'd with the tender grass ; or if it was look'd upon, as having a medicinal quality ; to gift it to some *Saint*, and honour it with his name. Hence it is that we have at this day wells and fountains called, some *St. John's*, *St. Mary Magdalen's*, *St. Mary's Well*, &c.

" To these kind of wells, the common people are accustomed to go, on a summer's evening, to refresh themselves with a walk after the toil of the day, to drink the water of the fountain, and enjoy the pleasing prospect of shade and stream.

" Now this custom (though, *at this time of day*, very commendable, and harmless, and innocent) seems to be the remains of that superstitious practice of the Papists, of paying adoration to wells and foun-

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\* Stowe's Survey of London, p. 18. edit. of 1618.

tains; for they imagined there was some holiness and sanctity in them, and so worshipped them.”\*

It was in the north especially, where Mr. Bourne resided, that wells of this description were most frequently to be found, possessing the advantages of a romantic situation, and preserved with care through the influence of the traditionary legends of the neighbouring village; for these retreats were supposed to be the haunts of fairies and good spirits who were accustomed to meet

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“ in dale, forest, or mead,  
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook.” †

At these wells offerings were frequently made, either owing to the conceived sanctity of the place, or from gratitude for imagined benefit received through the waters of the spring; and as those who had re-

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\* Bourne's Antiquities apud Brand, p. 90.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 356. — A fountain of this hallowed and mysterious nature, has been described by Mr. Southey in language most graphically and beautifully descriptive: —

“ There is a fountain in the forest call'd  
The fountain of the Fairies: when a child,  
With most delightful wonder I have heard  
Tales of the Elfin tribe that on its banks  
Hold midnight revelry. An ancient oak,  
The goodliest of the forest, grows beside,  
Alone it stands, upon a green grass plat,  
By the woods bounded like some little isle.  
It ever hath been deem'd their favourite tree,  
They love to lie and rock upon its leaves,  
And bask them in the moon-shine. Many a time  
Hath the woodman shown his boy where the dark round  
On the green-sward beneath its boughs, bewrays  
Their nightly dance, and bade him spare the tree.  
Fancy had cast a spell upon the place  
And made it holy; and the villagers  
Would say that never evil thing approached  
Unpunished there. The strange and fearful pleasure  
That fill'd me by that solitary spring,  
Ceas'd not in riper years; and now it woke  
Deeper delight, and more mysterious awe.”

Joan of Arc, vol. i. b. i. p. 126.



course to these fountains were usually of the lower class, small pieces of money were given, or even *rags* suspended on the trees or bushes which overhung the stream; whence these fountains in many places obtained the name of *Rag-wells*. One thus termed is mentioned, by Mr. Brand, as still exhibiting these tributary shreds at the village of Benton near Newcastle; Mr. Pennant records two at Spey and Drachaldy in Scotland; and Mr. Shaw tells us, that in the province of Moray *pilgrimages to wells* are not yet obsolete. \* In many places in the North, indeed, there are wells still remaining which were manifestly intended for the refreshment of the way-worn traveller, and are yet held in veneration. We have seen some of these with ladles of brass affixed to the stone-work by a chain, a convenience probably as ancient as the Anglo-Saxon era.

Several traditions of a peculiarly superstitious hue, have been cherished in this country with regard to the *bird-tribe*, and most of them have been introduced by our great poet as accessory either to the terrible, or the pathetic. The ominous croaking of the raven and the crow have been already mentioned, and we shall therefore, under the present head, merely advert to a few additional notices relative to the *owl* and the *ruddock*, the former the supposed herald of horror and disaster, the latter the romantic minister of charity and pity.

To the fearful bodings of the clamorous owl, which we have already introduced when treating of omens, may now be added a superstition which formerly rendered this unlucky bird the peculiar dread of mothers and nurses. It was firmly believed, that the screech-owl was in the habit of destroying infants by sucking out their blood and breath as they laid in the cradle. "Lamiæ," observes Lavaterus, "are things that make children afraid. Lamiæ are also called *Striges*. *Striges* (as they say) are unluckie-birds, whiche sucke out the blood of infants lying in their cradles. And hereof some men will have witches take their name, who also are called † *Volaticæ*."

\* Bourne's Antiquities apud Brand, p. 94, 95.

† Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght, p. 6.

This credulity relative to the *Strix* or screech-owl may be traced to Ovid \*, and is alluded to by Shakspeare in the following lines:—

“ We talk of goblins, *owls*, and elvish sprites;  
If we obey them not, this will ensue,  
They’ll *suck our breath*, and pinch us black and blue.” †

Another strange legend in the history of the owl is put into the mouth of the hapless Ophelia:—

“ Well, God ’ield you! They say the owl was a baker’s daughter;” ‡

a metamorphosis of which Mr. Douce has given us the origin; he tells us that it is yet a common story among the vulgar in Gloucestershire, and is thus related:—“ Our Saviour went into a baker’s shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon the baker’s daughter cried out ‘ Heugh, heugh, heugh,’ which owl-like noise, probably induced our Saviour for her wickedness to transform her into that bird.” He adds that this story was often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people. §

The partiality shown to the *ruddock* or *red-breast* seems to have been founded on the popular ballad of *The Children in the Wood*, and the play of *Cymbeline*. The charitable office, however, which these productions have ascribed to *Robin*, has an earlier origin than their date; for in Thomas Johnson’s *Cornucopia*, 4to. 1596, it is related that “ the robin redbrest if he find a man or woman dead, will cover all

\* Fast. lib. vi.

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 383, 384. Comedy of Errors, act ii. sc. 2.

‡ Hamlet, act 4. sc. 5.

§ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 280. note 3.



his face with mosse, and some thinke that if the body should remaine unburied that he would cover the whole body also.”\* It is highly probable that this anecdote might give birth to the burial of the babes, whom no one heeded,

“ Till *Robin-red-breast* painfully  
Did cover them with leaves ;”

for, according to Dr. Percy†, this pathetic narrative was built upon a play published by Rob. Yarrington in 1601. It is likewise possible that the same passage occasioned the beautiful lines in the play of *Cymbeline*, performed about 1606, where Arviragus, mourning over Imogen, exclaims —

————— “ With fairest flowers,  
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: Thou shalt not lack  
The flower, that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor  
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the *ruddock* would,  
With charitable bill — bring thee *all this*;  
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,  
To winter-ground thy corse.”‡

These interesting pictures of the red-breast would alone be sufficient to create an affectionate feeling for him; the attachment however has been ever since kept alive by delineations of a similar kind. In our author's time Drayton, Webster, and Dekker, have all alluded to this pleasing tradition: the first in his *Owl* 1604 —

“ Cov'ring with moss the deads unclosed eye,  
The little *red-breast* teacheth charitie;”§

the second in his Tragedy, called *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corom-bona*, 1612 —

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 577. note 5.

† Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 171. 4to. edit.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 576.

§ Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 408.

“ Call for the *robin red-breast* and the wren,  
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,  
 And with leaves and flowers do cover  
 The friendless bodies of unburied men;” \*

and the third in one of his pamphlets printed in 1616--“ They that cheere up a prisoner but with their sight, are *Robin red-breasts* that bring strawes in their bills to cover a dead man in extremitie.” †

Some wonderful properties relative to an imaginary gem, called a *carbuncle*, formed likewise a part of the popular creed. It was supposed to be the most transparent of all the precious stones, and to possess a native intrinsic lustre so powerful as to illuminate the atmosphere to a considerable distance around it. It was, therefore, very appositely adopted by the writers of romance, as an ornament and source of light for their subterranean palaces, and almost all our elder poets have gifted it with a similar brilliancy; thus Chaucer, in his *Romaunt of the Rose* ‡; Gower, in his *Confessio Amantis* §; Lydgate, in his *Description of King Priam's Palace* ||; and Stephen Hawes, in his *Pastime of Pleasure* ¶, have all celebrated it as a kind of second sun, and the most valuable of earthly products. Chaucer, more particularly, mentions it as so clear and bright, —

“ That al so sone as it was night,  
 Men mightin sene to go for nede  
 A mile, or two in length and brede,  
 Such light ysprange out of that stone.”

That this fiction was credited in the days of Elizabeth and James, may be conceded, not only from the familiar allusions of the poets, but from the philosophic writers on the superstitions of the age.

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. iii. p. 41.

† Villanies discovered by lanthorn and candle light, chap. xv. — For some modern tributes to the supposed charity of this domestic little bird, I refer my readers to the first volume of *Literary Hours*, 3d. edit. p. 65. et seq.

‡ Chalmers's English Poets, vol. i. p. 179.

§ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 177.

|| Description of King Priam's Palace, lib. ii.

¶ Vide Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. ii. p. 229.



To the *unborrowed* light of the carbuncle, Shakspeare has referred in *King Henry the Eighth*, where the Princess Elizabeth is prophetically termed,

————— “ a gem  
To lighten all this isle;” \*

and in *Titus Andronicus*, (if that play can be deemed his,) upon the discovery of Bassianus slaughtered in a pit ;

“ *Martius*. Upon his bloody finger he doth wear  
A precious ring, that lightens all the hole,  
—— like a taper in some monument ; †

He also mentions this “ rich jewel ” by way of comparison in *Coriolanus* ‡ ; appropriates it as an ornament to the wheels of Phœbus’s chariot in *Cymbeline* § ; and in the Player’s speech in *Hamlet*, the eyes of Pyrrhus are said to be “ like carbuncles.” ¶

Drayton describes this fabled stone with nearly as much precision as Chaucer ; he calls it

“ —— that admired, mighty stone,  
The *carbuncle* that’s named ;  
Which from it such a flaming light  
And radiancy ejecteth,  
That in the very darkest night  
The eye to it directeth.” ¶

A modern poet, remarkable for his powers of imagination, has beautifully, and very happily availed himself of these marvellous attributes, in describing the magnificent palace of Shedad, a passage which we shall transcribe, as it leads to an illustrative extract from a writer of Shakspeare’s age :

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 84. Act ii. sc. 3.

† Ibid. vol. xxi. p. 56.

‡ Ibid. vol. xvi. p. 39. Act i. sc. 4.

§ Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 632. Act v. sc. 5.

¶ Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 151. Act ii. sc. 2.

¶ Chalmers’s English Poets, vol. iv. p. 465.

“ Here self-suspended hangs in air,  
 As its pure substance loathed material touch,  
     The living carbuncle;  
     Sun of the lofty dome,  
 Darkness has no dominion o'er its beams;  
 Intense it glows, an ever-flowing tide  
 Of glory, like the day-flood in its source.”

“ I have no where seen,” says Mr. Southey in a note on these lines, “ so circumstantial an account of its (the carbuncle’s) wonderful properties as in a passage of Thuanus, quoted by Stephanus in his notes to Saxo-Grammaticus.

“ Whilst the King was at Bologna, a stone, wonderful in its species and nature, was brought to him from the East Indies, by a man unknown, who appeared by his manners to be a Barbarian. It sparkled as though all burning, with an incredible splendour; flashing radiance, and shooting on every side its beams, it filled the surrounding air to a great distance with a light scarcely by any eyes endurable. In this also it was wonderful, that being most impatient of the earth, if it was confined, it would force its way, and immediately fly aloft; neither could it be contained by any art of man in a narrow place, but appeared only to love those of ample extent. It was of the utmost purity, stained by no soil nor spot. Certain shape it had none, for its figure was inconstant, and momentarily changing, and though at a distance it was beautiful to the eye, it would not suffer itself to be handled with impunity, but hurt those who obstinately struggled with it, as many persons before many spectators experienced. If by chance any part of it was broken off, for it was not very hard, it became nothing less.” \*

An account equally minute, and in terms nearly similar, occurs in Scot’s Discoverie of Witchcraft, 1584, and both were probably taken from the same source, the writings of Fernel or Fernelius. This physician died in 1558; and his description, as copied by Scot, contributed, no doubt, to prolong the public credulity in this kingdom;

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\* Thalaba the Destroyer, vol. i. p. 39—41. edit. 1801.



though the English philosopher attempts to explain the phenomenon by supposing that actual flame was concentrated and burning in the centre of the gem.

“Johannes Fernelius writeth of a strange stone latelie brought out of India, which hath in it such a marvellous brightnes, puritie and shining, that therewith the aire round about is so lightned and cleared, that one may see to read thereby in the darknes of night. It will not be contained in a close roome, but requireth an open and free place. It would not willingly rest or staie here belowe on the earth, but alwaies laboureth to ascend up into the aire. If one presse it downe with his hand, it resisteth, and striveth verie sharplie. It is beautifull to behold, without either spot or blemish, and yet verie unpleasant to taste or feele. If any part thereof be taken awaie, it is never a whit diminished, the forme thereof being inconstant, and at everie moment mutable.”\*

The carbuncle was believed to be an animal substance generated in the body of a serpent, to possess a sexual distinction, the males having a star-formed burning nucleus, while the females dispersed their brilliancy on all sides in a formless blaze; and, like other transparent gems, to have the power of expelling evil spirits.

While on the subject of superstitious notions relative to luminous bodies, we may remark, that in the age of Shakspeare, the wandering lights, termed *Will-o-wisp* and *Jack-o-Lantern*, were supposed by the common people to be occasioned by demons and malignant fairies, with the view of leading the benighted traveller to his destruction. “Many tymes,” says Lavaterus, “candles and small fiers appeare in the night, and seeme to run up and downe; — those fiers some time seeme to come together, and by and by to be severed and run abroade, and at the last to vanish clean away. Somtime these fiers go alone in the night season, and put such as see them, as they travel by night, in great fear. But these things, and many suche lyke, have

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\* Discoverie of Witchcraft, p. 306.

their natural causes: *and yet I will not denye, but that many tymes Dyvels delude men in this manner.*" \*

Stephano, in the *Tempest*, attributes this phenomenon to the agency of a mischievous fairy: "Monster, your fairy, which, you say, is a harmless fairy, has done little better than *played the Jack with us.*" †

Various causes have been assigned for the appearance of the *ignis fatuus*; modern chemistry asserts it to be occasioned by hydrogen gas, evolving from decaying vegetables, and the decomposition of pyritic coal; and when seen hovering on the surface of burial grounds, to originate from the same gas in a higher state of volatility, through the agency of phosphoric impregnation.

The *partial* view which we have now taken of the superstitions of the country, as they existed in the age of Shakspeare, will, in part, demonstrate how great was the credulity subsisting at this period; how well calculated were many of these popular delusions for the purposes of the dramatic writer, and how copiously and skilfully have these been moulded and employed by the great poet of our stage. A considerable portion also of the manners, customs, and diversions of the country, which had been necessarily omitted in the preceding chapters, will be found included in this sketch of a part of the popular creed, and will contribute to heighten the effect of a picture, which can only receive its completion through the mutual aid of various subsequent departments of the present work.

\* Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by nyght, p. 51.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 142, 143. Act iv. sc. 1,



## CHAPTER X.

BIOGRAPHY OF SHAKSPEARE RESUMED — HIS IRREGULARITIES — DEER-STEALING IN SIR THOMAS LUCY'S PARK — ACCOUNT OF THE LUCY FAMILY — DAISY-HILL, THE KEEPER'S LODGE, WHERE SHAKSPEARE WAS CONFINED ON THE CHARGE OF STEALING DEER — SHAKSPEARE'S REVENGE — BALLAD ON LUCY — SEVERE PROSECUTION OF SIR THOMAS — NEVER FORGOTTEN BY SHAKSPEARE — THIS CAUSE, AND PROBABLY ALSO DEBT, AS HIS FATHER WAS NOW IN REDUCED CIRCUMSTANCES, INDUCED HIM TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR LONDON ABOUT 1586 — REMARKS ON THIS REMOVAL.

AFTER the slight sketch of rural life which we have just given ; of its manners, customs, diversions, and superstitions, as they existed during the latter part of the sixteenth century, we shall now proceed with the biographical narrative of our author, resuming it from the close of the fourth chapter.

To regulate the workings of an ardent imagination, and to control the effervescence of the passions in early life, experience has uniformly taught us to consider as a task of great difficulty ; and seldom, indeed, capable of being achieved without the advice and direction of those, who, under the guidance of similar admonition, have succesfully borne up against the numerous temptations to which human frailty is subjected. That Shakspeare possessed powers of fancy greatly beyond the common lot of humanity, and that with these is almost constantly connected a correspondent fervency of temperament and passion, will not probably be denied ; and if it be recollected that the poet became the arbitrator of his own conduct at the early age of eighteen, not much wonder will be excited, although he was a married man, and a father, if we have to record some juvenile irregularities. Tradition affirms, and the report has been repeated by Mr. Rowe, that he had the misfortune, shortly after his settlement in Stratford, to form an intimacy with some young men of thoughtless and dissipated character, who, among other illegalities, had been in the habit of deer-stealing,

and by whom, more than once, he was induced, under the idea of a frolic, to join in their reprehensible practice.

The scene of depredation when Shakspeare and his companions were detected, was Fulbroke Park, at that time belonging to Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight. This gentleman, who has obtained celebrity principally, if not solely, as the prosecutor of Shakspeare, was descended from a family, whose pedigree has been deduced, by Dugdale, from the reign of Richard the First; the name of Lucy, however, was not assumed by his ancestors until the thirty-fourth of Henry the Third. Sir Thomas, in the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, built a noble mansion at Charlcott, near Stratford, but on the opposite side of the Avon; this edifice, which still exists, is constructed of brick with stone coins, and though somewhat modernized, still preserves, as a whole, its ancient Gothic character, especially the grand front, which exhibits pretty accurately its pristine state. Fuller has recorded Sir Thomas as sheriff for the county of Warwickshire in the tenth year of Elizabeth, and informs us, that his armorial bearings were Gul. Crusulee Or, 3 Picks (or Lucies) Hauriant Ar. \*

That the rich woods, sequestered lawns, and romantic recesses of Fulbroke Park, would very frequently attract the footsteps of our youthful bard, independent of any lure which the capture of its game might afford, we may justly surmise; and still more confidently may we affirm, that his meditations or diversions in this forest laid the foundation of a part of the beautiful scenery which occurs in *As You Like It*. The woodland pictures in this delightful play are faithful transcripts of what he had felt and seen in those secluded haunts, particularly the description of the wounded deer, the pathos and accuracy of which are no doubt referrible to the actual contemplation of such an incident, in the shades of Fulbroke; they strikingly prove, indeed, that the habits of the chase, though fostered in the morn of youth, had not,

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\* Fuller's Worthies, part iii. p. 132. The Luce or Pike is very abundant in this part of the Avon, and there may still be seen in the kitchen of Charlecot-house, the representation of a pike, weighing forty pounds, a native of this stream, and caught in the year 1640.



even in respect to the objects of their sport, in the smallest degree impaired the native tenderness and humanity of the poet. The expressions of pity, in fact, for the sufferings of a persecuted animal were never uttered in words more impressive than what the ensuing dialogue exhibits :

*“ Duke. Come, shall we go and kill us venison ?*

*And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools, —  
Being native burghers of this desert city, —  
Should, in their own confines, with forked heads  
Have their round haunches gor’d.*

*Lord. Indeed, my lord,  
The melancholy Jaques grieves at that ;  
And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp  
Than doth your brother that hath banish’d you.  
To-day, my lord of Amiens, and myself,  
Did steal behind him, as he lay along  
Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood :  
To the which place a poor sequester’d stag,  
That from the hunter’s aim had ta’en a hurt,  
Did come to languish ; and, indeed, my lord,  
The wretched animal heav’d forth such groans,  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting ; and the big round tears  
Cours’d one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase : and thus the hairy fool,  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears.” \**

The detection of Shakspeare in his adventurous amusement, was followed, it is said, by confinement for a short time in the keeper’s lodge, until the charge had been substantiated against him. A farmhouse in the park, situated on a spot called Daisy Hill, is still pointed out as the very building which sheltered the delinquent on this unfortunate occasion. †

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 42, 43. Act ii. sc. 1.

† Ireland’s Views on the Avon, p. 154.

That Sir Thomas had reason to complain of this violation of his property, and was warranted in taking proper steps to prevent its recurrence, who will deny? and yet it appears from tradition, that a reprimand and public exposure of his conduct constituted all the punishment that was at *first* inflicted on the offender. Here the matter would have rested, had not the irritable feelings of our young bard, inflamed by the disgrace which he had suffered, induced him to attempt a retaliation on the magistrate. He had recourse to his talents for satire, and the ballad which he produced for this purpose was probably his earliest effort as a writer.

Of this pasquinade, which the poet took care should be affixed to Sir Thomas's park-gates, and extensively circulated through his neighbourhood, three stanzas have been brought forward as genuine fragments. The preservation of the whole would certainly have been a most entertaining curiosity; but even the authenticity of what is said to have been preserved, becomes a subject of interest, when we recollect, that the fate and fortunes of our author hinged upon the consequences of this juvenile production.

The first of these fragments, which is the opening stanza, rests upon testimony of considerable weight and respectability; upon the authority of a Mr. Thomas Jones, who was born about 1613 and resided at Tarbick, a village in Worcestershire, eighteen miles from Stratford, where he died, aged upwards of ninety, in 1703. He is considered by Mr. Malone, as the grandson of a Mr. Thomas Jones, who dwelt in Stratford during the period that Shakspeare was an inhabitant of it, and who had four sons between the years 1581 and 1590, one of whom, settling at Tarbick, became the father of the preserver of the fragment.\* This venerable old man could remember having heard from several very aged people at Stratford the whole history of the poet's transgression, and could repeat the first stanza of the ballad which he had written in ridicule of Sir Thomas. A friend of his to whom he was one day repeating this

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 128. note 1.



stanza, which was the whole that he could recollect, had the precaution to take a copy of it from his recitation, and the grandson of the person thus favoured, a Mr. Wilkes, presented a transcript of it to Mr. Oldys and Mr. Capell. Among the collections for a *Life of Shakspeare* left by the former of these gentlemen, this stanza was found, "faithfully transcribed," says its possessor, "from the copy which his (Mr. Jones's) relation very courteously communicated to me\*;" and of Mr. Oldys's veracity it is important to add, that Mr. Steevens considered it as unimpeachable, remarking, at the same time, that "it is not very probable that a ballad should be forged, from which an undiscovered wag could derive no triumph over antiquarian credulity." † It must be confessed that neither the wit nor the poetry of these lines, which we are about to communicate, deserve much praise, and that the greater part of the point, if it can be termed such, depends upon provincial pronunciation; for in a note on the copy which Mr. Capell possessed, it is said, that "the people of those parts pronounce *lowsie* like *Lucy* ‡:" but let us listen to the commencement of this once important libel:—

" A parlamente member, a justice of peace,  
At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse,  
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,  
Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it:  
    He thinks himself greate,  
    Yet an asse in his state  
We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.  
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,  
Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it."

Upon the next fragment of this composition, including two stanzas, an equal degree of confidence cannot be reposed; for it occurs in a manuscript *History of the Stage*, written between the years 1727 and 1730, in which many falsehoods have been detected; but still the internal evidence is such as to render its genuineness

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 62. note. † Ibid. p. 62.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 63.

far from improbable. The narrative of its acquisition informs us, that "the learned Mr. Joshua Barnes, late Greek Professor of the University of Cambridge, baiting about forty years ago at an inn in Stratford, and hearing an old woman singing part of the above said song, such was his respect for Mr. Shakspeare's genius, that he gave her a new gown for the two following stanzas in it; and could she have said it all, he would (as he often said in company, when any discourse has casually arose about him) have given her ten guineas;

" Sir Thomas was too covetous  
To covet so much *deer*,  
When horns enough upon his head,  
Most plainly did appear.

Had not his Worship one *deer* left?  
What then? He had a wife  
Took pains enough to find him horns  
Should last him during life." \*

The quibble upon the word *deer* in these lines strongly tends to authenticate them as a genuine production of our bard; for he has in more places than one of his dramas amused himself with a similar jingle: thus in the *First Part of Henry the Sixth*, allowing this play to have issued from his pen, Talbot, encouraging his forces, exclaims

" Sell every man his life as *dear* as mine,  
And they shall find *dear deer* of us my friends;" †

and again in the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth*, the Prince, lamenting over Falstaff, says

" Death hath not struck so fat a *deer* to-day,  
Though many *dearer*, in this bloody fray." ‡

Mr. Whiter, who first applied these corroborating passages to the subject before us, adds, "With respect to the verses in question,

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 63.

† Ibid. vol. xiii. p. 127. Act iv. sc. 2.

‡ Ibid. vol. xi. p. 426. Act v. sc. 4.



I cannot but observe that, however suspicious their external evidence may appear, they contain within themselves some very striking features of authenticity ; and may, I think, be readily conceived to have proceeded from the pen of our young Bard, before he was removed from the little circle of his native place, when his powers, unformed and unpractised, were roused only by resentment to a Country Justice, and destined merely to delight the rustic companions of his deer-stealing adventure. — As an additional evidence to the quibble on the word *deer*, which appears to be intended in these verses, we may observe that there is no topic, to which our author so delights to allude, as the Horns of the Cuckold. — Let me be permitted to remark in general, that the anecdotes, which have been delivered down to us respecting our poet, appear to me neither improbable, nor, when duly examined, inconsistent with each other : even those, which seem least allied to probability, contain in my opinion the *adumbrata*, if not *expressa signa veritatis*.” \*

Whatever might be the merits of this ballad as a poetical composition, its effect as a satire was severely felt ; nor can we greatly blame the conduct of Sir Thomas Lucy, if we consider, on the one hand, the lenity which was at first shown to the young offender, and, on the other, the publicity which was industriously given to this provoking libel ; for it is recorded by Mr. Jones of Tarbick, that it was the placarding of this piece of sarcasm “ which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to proceed against † him.” More magnanimity, it must be confessed, would have been displayed by altogether neglecting this splenetic retaliation ; but still the provocation was sufficiently bitter to excite the resentment of a man who might not be entitled to the appellations so liberally bestowed on Sir Thomas by one of the poet’s commentators of “ vain, weak, and vindictive ‡.” The protection of property and character, provided the means resorted to for security be proportioned to the

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\* Whiter’s Specimen of a Commentary on Shakspeare, p. 94, 95.

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 62.

‡ Ibid.

offence, can neither be deemed foolish nor oppressive, and that the bounds of moderation were exceeded in this instance, we have no sufficient grounds for asserting. Of the character of the magistrate nothing certain has transpired; but if we may be allowed to form an opinion of his temper and abilities, from the only trait which can be considered as indicatory, we must pronounce them to have been neither despicable nor unamiable. In the church at Charlcott there are still remaining several monuments of the Lucy family, among which is one to the memory of Sir Thomas and his lady; the effigies of the knight affords a very pleasing idea of his countenance, but is unaccompanied by date or inscription; over his wife, however, who reposes by his side, at the age of sixty-three, is a very striking encomium *written by himself*, the conclusion of which is attested in the following emphatic terms; after much apparently sincere eulogy, he adds, that she was, "when all is spoken that can be said, a woman so furnished and garnished with vertue as not to be bettered, and hardly to be equalled by any. As she lived most vertuously, so she dyed most godly. *Set down by him* that best did know what hath been written to be true." THOMAS LUCY."

This may very justly be considered, we think, as a proof, not only of the conjugal happiness of our knight, but of his possession of an intellect far from contemptible; yet is it very possible that resentment, even in a mind of still superior order, should for a time excite undue warmth and animosity, especially under the lash of satire; and we are the more willing to believe this to have been the case in the present instance, both from the known benevolence of the poet's character, and from the pertinacity with which he continued to remember the injury; for it is generally agreed that the opening scene of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is intended to ridicule Sir Thomas, under the character of Justice Shallow. Now the representation of this comedy in its new-modelled and enlarged state, certainly did not take place until after the accession of King James, and as the prosecutor of our bard died on the 18th of August, 1600, it is not probable that the resentment of the



poet would have survived the death of Sir Thomas, had not the severity of the magistrate been originally pushed too far.

This dialogue also between Shallow, Slender, and Sir Hugh Evans, serves strongly to confirm the authenticity of the commencing stanza of the ballad ; for the Welsh parson plays upon the word *luce* in the same manner as that fragment has done upon the sir-name *Lucy*. Justice Shallow, it should likewise be remembered, is complaining of Falstaff for beating his men, *killing his deer*, and breaking open his lodge, and he threatens that “ if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire,” to which Slender adds,—  
“ In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram*.

*Shal.* Ay, cousin Slender, and *Cust-alorum*.

*Slen.* Ay, and *ratolorum* too, and a gentleman born, master parson ; who writes himself *armigero* ; in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.

*Shal.* Ay, that we do ; and have done any time these three hundred years.

*Slen.* All his successors, gone before him, have done't ; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may : they may give the dozen white luces in their coat.

*Shal.* It is an old coat.

*Evans.* The dozen white *louses* do become an old coat well ; it agrees well, passant : it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies — love.

*Shal.* The luce is the fresh fish ; the salt fish is an old coat.

*Slen.* I may quarter, coz ?

*Shal.* You may, by marrying.

*Evans.* It is marring, indeed, if he quarter it.

*Shal.* Not a whit.

*Evans.* Yes, py'r-lady ; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures ; but this all one : if Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

*Shal.* The Council shall hear it ; it is a riot.” \*

Though the portrait thus given of Sir Thomas Lucy (in the person of Shallow) represent him as *weak* and *vain*, yet we must recollect that it is still drawn in the spirit of retaliation and satire, and was most undoubtedly meant for a caricature.

It appears then more than probable, indeed from the testimony of Mr. Jones it appears to be the fact, that the prosecution, which,

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 7. et seq.



there is little doubt, had been threatened on the detection of the trespass, was only carried into execution in consequence of the *poetical* assault on the part of our author, who, possibly, thought nothing serious could occur from such a mode of revenge.

The circumstances, therefore, of the prosecution being threatened in the first instance, and taking place in the second, might occasion the report which Mr. Rowe has inserted in his *Life of Shakspeare*, where, speaking of the ballad as his first essay in poetry, he adds, "it is said to have been so very bitter, that it *redoubled* the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London." \*

That Shakspeare left Stratford for London, about the year 1586 or 1587, and that the prosecution commenced by Sir Thomas Lucy contributed to this change of situation, are events which we may with safety admit; but that the libel was the *sole* cause of the removal appears not very probable; and we are inclined to believe with Mr. Chalmers, that debt added wings to his flight. "While other boys," remarks this ingenious controversialist, "are only snivelling at school, and thinking nothing of life, Shakspeare entered the world, with little but his love to make him happy, and little but his genius to prevent the intrusion of misery. An increasing family, and pressing wants, obliged him to look beyond the limits of Stratford, for subsistence, and for fame. He felt, doubtless, emotions of genius, and he saw, certainly, persons, who had not better pretensions, than his own, rising to eminence in a higher scene. By these motives was he probably induced to remove to London, in the period, between the years 1585, and 1588; chased from his home, by the terriers of the law, for debt, rather than for deer-stealing, or for libelling." †

The probability of this having been the case, will be much heightened, when we recollect, that between the years 1579 and 1586 the father of Shakspeare had fallen into distressed circumstances;

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\* Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. i. p. 63.

† Chalmers's *Apology*, p. 47, 48.



that during the first of these periods, he had been excused paying a weekly contribution of 4*d.*, and that during the latter he was under the necessity of resigning his office as alderman, not being able to defray the expense of attendance at the common halls; facts, which while they ascertain his impoverished state, at the same time prove his utter inability to assist his son, now burdened with a family, and anxiously looking round for the means of its support.

For the adoption of the year 1586 or 1587, as the era of our author's emigration to town, several powerful, and almost convincing, arguments may be given, and these it will be necessary here to state.

It is well ascertained that Shakspeare married in the year 1582, and Mr. Rowe has affirmed that "in this kind of settlement he continued *for some time*, till an extravagance (the deer-stealing frolic) that he was guilty of, forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up." \* Now that this *settlement for some time* was the period which elapsed between the years 1582 and 1586, will almost certainly appear, when we recollect the domestic events which occurred during its progress; that, according to tradition, he had embraced his father's business, on entering into the marriage-state; and that the family of the poet in short was increased in this interval, by the birth of three children, baptized at Stratford; Susanna, May 26th, 1583, and Hamnet and Judith, Feb. 2d, 1584-5.

That the removal was not likely to have taken place later than 1587, will be generally admitted, when we advert to the commencement of his literary labours. The issue of research has rendered it highly probable that our bard was a corrector and improver of old plays for the stage in 1589; it has discovered from evidence amounting almost to certainty, that he was a writer for the theatre on a plan of greater originality in 1591, and that, even so early as 1592, he was noticed as a dramatic poet of some celebrity. Now, if we compare

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 61.

these facts, which will be noticed more fully hereafter, with the poet's own assertion, that the *Venus and Adonis* was "*the first heir of his invention* \*," it will go far to prove, that this poem, which is not a short one, and is elaborated with great care, must have been composed between his departure from Stratford, and his commencement as a writer for the stage, (that is between the years 1586 and 1589;) for while there is no ground to surmise that it was written on the banks of the Avon, there is sufficient evidence to assert that it was finished, though not published before he was known to fame.

It is impossible to contemplate the flight of Shakspeare from his family and native town, without pausing to reflect upon the consequences which followed that event; consequences most singularly propitious, not only to the intellectual character of his country in particular, but to the excitation and progress of genius throughout the world. Had not poverty and prosecution united in driving Shakspeare from his humble occupation in Warwickshire, how many matchless lessons of wisdom and morality, how many unparalleled displays of wit and imagination, of pathos and sublimity, had been buried in oblivion; pictures of emotion, of character, of passion, more profound than mere philosophy had ever conceived, more impressive than poetry had ever yet embodied; strains which shall now sound through distant posterity with increasing energy and interest, and which shall powerfully and beneficially continue to influence and to mould both national and individual feeling.

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\* Vide Dedication of the Poem to the Earl of Southampton.



# SHAKSPEARE AND HIS TIMES.

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## PART II.

### *SHAKSPEARE IN LONDON.*

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#### CHAPTER I.

SHAKSPEARE'S ARRIVAL IN LONDON ABOUT THE YEAR 1586, WHEN TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF AGE — LEAVES HIS FAMILY AT STRATFORD, VISITING THEM OCCASIONALLY — HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE STAGE — HIS MERITS AS AN ACTOR.

No era in the annals of Literary History ever perhaps occurred of greater importance, than that which witnessed the entrance of Shakspeare into the metropolis of his native country ; a position which will readily be granted, if we consider the total revolution which this event produced in the Literature of the Stage, and the vast influence which, through the medium of the most popular branch of our poetry, it has subsequently exerted on the minds, manners, and taste of our countrymen. Friendless, persecuted, poor, about the early age of twenty-two, was the greatest poet which the world has ever seen, compelled to desert his home, his wife, his children, to seek employment from the hands of strangers. Rich, however, in talent, beyond all the sons of men, blessed with a cheerful disposition, an active mind, and a heart conscious of integrity, soon did the clouds which overspread his youth break away, and unveil a character which has ever since been the delight, the pride, the boast of England.

We have assigned some strong reasons, at the close of the last chapter, for placing the epoch of Shakspeare's arrival in London, about 1586 or 1587; and we shall now bring forward some presumptive proofs that he not only left his wife and family at Stratford on his first visit to the capital, but that his native town continued to be their settled residence during his life.

Mr. Rowe has affirmed upon a tradition which we have no claim to dispute, that he "was obliged to *leave his family* for some time;" a fact in the highest degree probable from the causes which led to his removal; for it is not to be supposed, situated as he then was, that he would be willing to render his wife and children the companions and partakers of the disasters and disappointments which it was probable he had to encounter. Tradition further says, as preserved in the manuscripts of Aubrey, that "he was wont to go to his native country once a yeare\*;" and Mr. Oldys, in his collections for a life of our author, repeats this report with an additional circumstance, remarking, "if tradition may be trusted, Shakspeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journey to and from London."† It is true that these traditions, if insulated from other circumstances, might merely prove that he visited the place of his birth annually, without necessarily inferring that his family was also resident there; but if we consult the parish-register of Stratford, their testimony will indeed be strong, and powerfully confirm the deduction; for it appears on that record that, merely including his children, there is a succession of baptisms, marriages, and deaths in his family at Stratford, from the year 1583 to 1616.‡ This evidence,

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 214.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 124. — Antony Wood, it appears, was the original author of this anecdote, for he tells us in his *Athenæ*, that John Davenant, who kept the Crown, was "an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially Shakspeare, who frequented his house in his journies between Warwickshire and London." *Ath. Oxon.* vol. ii. p. 292.

‡ The Register informs us, —

1st. That his daughter Susanna was baptized there on the 26th May 1583.

2d. That Hamnet and Judith, his twin-son and daughter, were baptized there the 2d of February 1584.



so satisfactory in itself, will be strengthened when we recollect that the poet in his mortgage, dated the 10th of March, 1612-13, is described as William Shakspeare of *Stratford-upon-Avon*, gentleman; and that by his contemporaries he was frequently stiled the *Sweet Swan of Avon*, designations which, when combined with the testimony already adduced, must be considered as implying the family-residence of the poet. \*

It was this concatenation of circumstances which induced Mr. Chalmers, than whom a more indefatigable enquirer with regard to our author has not existed, to conclude that Shakspeare had no "fixed residence in the metropolis," nor "ever considered London, as his home †;" but had "resolved that his wife and family should remain through life" at Stratford, "though he himself made frequent excursions to London, the scene of his profit, and the theatre of his fame ‡;" adding, in a note, that the evidence from the parish-register of Stratford had compelled even *scepticism* to admit his position to be *very probable*. §

While discussing this subject in his first Apology, he has introduced a novel and most curious fact, for the purpose of guarding the reader against an apparently opposing, but too hasty inference. "If documents," he observes, "be produced to prove, that *one* Shakspeare, a player, resided in St. Saviour's parish, Southwark, at the end of the sixteenth, or the beginning of the seventeenth, century,

3d. That his son Hamnet was buried there, on the 11th of August 1596.

4th. That his daughter Susanna was there married to John Hall, on the 5th of June 1607.

5th. That his daughter Judith was there married to Thomas Queeny, on the 10th of February 1611. — Vide Chalmers's Apology, p. 247.

\* Ben Jonson, in his Poem to the Memory of Shakspeare, calls him "Sweet Swan of Avon;" and Joseph Taylor, who represented the part of Hamlet in 1596, in the Dedication which he and his fellow-players wrote for Beaumont and Fletcher's Works, in 1647, speaks of "the flowing compositions of the then expired *sweet swan of Avon*, Shakspeare."

† Chalmers's Apology, p. 247.

‡ Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, p. 227.

§ Ibid. p. 227. note d.



this evidence will not be conclusive proof of the settled residence of Shakspeare : For, it is a fact, as new, as it is curious, that his brother Edmond, who was baptized on the 3d of May, 1580, became a *player at the Globe* ; lived in St. Saviour's ; and was buried in *the church* of that parish : the entry in the register being without a blur ; ' 1607 December 31 ,(was buried) *Edmond Shakspeare, a player, in the church ;* ' there can be no dispute about the date, or the name, or the *profession*. It is remarkable, that the parish-clerk, who scarcely ever mentions any other distinction of the deceased, than a *man*, or a *woman*, should, by I know not what inspiration, have recorded Edmond Shakspeare, as a *player*. There were, consequently, two Shakspeares on the stage, during the same period ; as there were two Burbadges, who were also brothers, and who acted on the same theatre." \*

Upon the whole, we may with considerable confidence and safety conclude, that the *family-residence* of Shakspeare was *always* at Stratford ; that he himself originally went *alone* to London, and that he spent the greater part of every year there *alone*, annually, however, and probably for some months, returning to the bosom of his family, and that this alternation continued until he finally left the capital.

Having disposed of this question, another, even still more doubtful, immediately follows, with regard to the employment and mode of life which the poet was compelled to adopt on reaching the metropolis. Mr. Rowe, recording the consequences of the prosecution in Warwickshire, observes,—“ It is at *this time*, and upon *this accident*, that he is said to have made his *first acquaintance in the play-house*. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a *very mean rank*.” †

From this passage we may in the first place infer, that Shakspeare, *immediately* on his arrival in town, applied to the theatre for support ; an expedient to which there is reason to suppose he was induced, by a previous connection or acquaintance with one or more of the per-

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\* Chalmers's Apology, p. 423. note a.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 63.



formers. It appears, indeed, from the researches of Mr. Malone, that the probability of his being known, even while at Stratford, to Heminge, Burbadge, and Thomas Greene, all of them celebrated comedians of their day, is very considerable. "I suspect," remarks this acute commentator, "that both he (namely, John Heminge,) and Burbadge were Shakspeare's countrymen, and that Heminge was born at Shottery, a village in Warwickshire, at a very small distance from Stratford-upon-Avon; where Shakspeare found his wife. I find two families of this name settled in that town early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth, the daughter of *John Heming* of Shottery, was baptized at Stratford-upon-Avon, March 12. 1567. This John might have been the father of the actor, though I have found no entry relative to his baptism: for he was probably born before the year 1558, when the Register commenced. In the village of Shottery also lived *Richard Hemyng*, who had a son christened by the name of John, March 7. 1570. Of the Burbadge family the only notice I have found, is, an entry in the Register of the parish of Stratford, October 12. 1565, on which day Philip Green was married in that town to Ursula *Burbadge*, who might have been sister to James Burbadge, the father of the actor, whose marriage I suppose to have taken place about that time. If this conjecture be well founded, our poet, we see, had an easy introduction to the theatre."\*

The same remark which concludes this paragraph is repeated by the commentator when speaking of *Thomas Greene*, whom he terms, a *celebrated comedian*, the *townsman* of Shakspeare, and perhaps his *relation*.† The celebrity of Greene as an actor is fully ascertained by an address to the reader, prefixed by Thomas Heywood to his edition of John Cook's *Green's Tu Quoque; or, The City Gallant*; "as for Maister Greene," says Heywood, "all that I will speak of him (and that without flattery) is this (if I were worthy to censure) there was not an actor of his nature, in his time, of better ability in performance of what he undertook, more applauded by the audience, of

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 233.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 230.

greater grace at the court, or of more general love in the city \* ;” but the townsmanship and affinity rest only on the inference to be drawn from an entry in the parish-register of Stratford, and from some lines quoted by Chetwood from the comedy of the *Two Maids of Moreclack*, which represent Greene speaking in the character of a clown, and declaring

“ I pratled poesie in my nurse’s arms,  
And, born, where late our swan of Avon sung,  
In Avon’s streams we both of us have lav’d,  
And both came out together.” †

As these lines are not, however, in the play from which they are pretended to have been taken ; as they appear to be a parody on a passage in Milton’s *Lycidas*, and as Chetwood has been detected in falsifying and forging many of his dates, little credit can be attached to their evidence, and we must solely depend upon the import of the register, which records that *Thomas Greene, ALIAS SHAKSPERE, was buried there, March 6th, 1589.* ‡ If this Thomas were the father of the actor, and the probability of this being the case cannot be denied, and may even have led to the attempted imposition of Chetwood, the affinity, as well as the townsmanship, will be established. §

It seems, therefore, neither rash nor inconsequent to believe, in failure of more direct evidence, that the channel through which Shakspeare, immediately on his arrival in town, procured an introduction to the stage, was first opened by his relationship to Greene, who possessing, as we have seen, great merit and influence as an actor, could easily insure him a connection at the theatre, and would naturally recommend him to his countryman Heminge, who was then about thirty years of age, and had already acquired considerable reputation as a performer. ||

\* Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 539.

† British Theatre, p. 9.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 230. note 1.

§ Vide Malone’s Inquiry, p. 94.

|| Mr. Chalmers, speaking of Heminges, says—“There is reason to believe, that he was, originally, a *Warwickshire lad*; a shire, which has produced so many players and poets; the Burbages; the Shakspeares; the Greens; and the Harts.” Apology, p. 435, 436.



Mr. Rowe's *second* assertion that he was received into the company, then in being, at first in a *very mean rank*, has given rise to some reports relative to the nature of his early employment at the theatre, which are equally inconsistent and degrading. It has been related that his first office was that of *Call-boy*, or attendant on the prompter, and that his business was to give notice to the performers when their different entries on the stage were required. \* Another tradition, which places him in a still meaner occupation, is said to have been transmitted through the medium of Sir William Davenant to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe, and this gentleman to Mr. Pope, by whom, according to Dr. Johnson, it was related in the following terms: — “ In the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play, and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will. Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will. Shakspeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will. Shakspeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, *I am Shakspeare's boy, Sir*. In time, Shakspeare found higher employment: but as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of *Shakspeare's boys*.” †

Of this curious anecdote it should not be forgotten, that it made its *first* appearance in Cibber's *Lives of the Poets* ‡; and that if it

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 63. note 2.

† Ibid. p. 120.

‡ *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 130.

were known to Mr. Rowe, it is evident he thought it so little entitled to credit that he chose not to risque its insertion in his life of the poet. In short, if we reflect for a moment that Shakspeare, though he fled from Stratford to avoid the severity of a prosecution, could not be destitute either of money or friends, as the necessity for that flight was occasioned by an imprudent ebullition of wit, and not by any serious delinquency; that the father of his wife was a yeoman both of respectability and property; that his own parent, though impoverished, was still in business; and that he had, in all likelihood, a ready admission to the stage through the influence of persons of leading weight in its concerns; we cannot, without doing the utmost violence to probability, conceive that, under these circumstances, and in the twenty-third year of his age, he would submit to the degrading employment of either a *horse-holder* at the door of a theatre, or of a *call-boy* within its walls.

Setting aside, therefore, these idle tales, we may reasonably conclude that by the phrase *a very mean rank*, Mr. Rowe meant to imply, that his first engagement as an *actor* was in the performance of characters of the lowest class. That his fellow-comedians were ushered into the dramatic world in a similar way, and rose to higher occupancy by gradation, the history of the stage will sufficiently prove: Richard Burbadge, for instance, who began his career nearly at the same time with our author, and who subsequently became the greatest tragedian of his age, had, in the year 1589, appeared in no character more important than that of *a Messenger*. \* If this were the case with a performer of such acknowledged merit, we may readily acquiesce in the supposition that the parts first given to Shakspeare were equally as insignificant; and as readily allow that an actor thus circumstanced might very properly be said to have been admitted into the company *at first in a very mean rank*.

As Shakspeare's *immediate* employment, therefore, on his arrival in town, appears to have been that of an *actor*, it cannot be deemed

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\* Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, p. 158. note n.



irrelevant if we should here enquire into his merits and success in this department.

Two traditions, of a contradictory complexion, have reached us relative to Shakspeare's powers as an actor; one on the authority of Mr. Aubrey, and the other on that of Mr. Rowe. In the manuscript papers of the first of these gentlemen, we are told that our author, "being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, — and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and *did act exceedingly well* \*;" but, in the life of the poet by the second, it is added, after mentioning his admission to the theatre in an inferior rank, that "his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, *if not as an extraordinary actor*, yet as an excellent writer. His name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of the other players, before some old plays, but without any particular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have enquired, I could never meet with any further account of him this way, than *that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet.*" †

Of descriptions thus opposed, a preference only can be given as founded on other evidence; and it happens that subsequent enquiry has enabled us to consider Mr. Aubrey's account as approximating nearest to the truth.

Contemporary authority, it is evident, would decide the question, and happily the researches of Mr. Malone have furnished us with a testimony of this kind. In the year 1592, Henry Chettle, a dramatic writer, published a posthumous work of Robert Greene's, under the title of "Greene's Groatsworth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentance," in which the author speaks harshly of Marlowe, and still more so of Shakspeare, who was then rising into fame. Both these poets were justly offended, and Chettle, who was of course implicated in their displeasure, printed, in the December of the same year, a pamphlet, entitled *Kind Harts Dreame*, to which is prefixed an

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 213.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 64.



address to the *Gentlemen Readers*, apologizing, in the following terms, for the offence which he had given :

“ About three months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers’ hands, among others his *Groatsworth of Wit*, in which a letter written to divers play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken ; and because on the dead they cannot be re-avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a living author : and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have, all the time of my conversing in printing, hindered the bitter inveighing against schollers, it hath been very well known ; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently prove. With *neither* of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them (‘ Marlowe’) I care not if I never be. The other (‘ Shakspeare’), whom at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the hate of living writers, and might have used my own discretion, (especially in such a case, the author being dead,) that I did not, I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault ; because *myselfe have seene his demeanour no less civil than he EXCELLENT IN THE QUALITIE HE PROFESSES. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honestie, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.* For the first, whose learning I reverence, and at the perusing of Greene’s booke, strooke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ ; or had it been true, yet to publish it was intollerable ; him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve.” \*

This curious passage clearly evinces that our author was deemed EXCELLENT as an actor, (for the phrase *the qualitie he professes* peculiarly denoted at that time the profession of a player,) in the year 1592, only five or six years, at most, after he had entered on the stage ; and consequently that the information which Aubrey had received was correct, while that obtained by Rowe must be considered as unfounded.

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. ii. p. 237, 238.



So well instructed, indeed, was Shakspeare in the duties and qualities of an *actor*, that it appears from Downes' book, entitled *Roscius Anglicanus*, that he undertook to teach and perfect John Lowin in the character of King Henry the Eighth, and Joseph Taylor in that of Hamlet.

Of his competency for this task, several parts of his dramatic works might be brought forward as sufficient proof. Independent of his celebrated instructions to the player in Hamlet, which would alone ascertain his intimate knowledge of the histrionic art, his conception of the powers necessary to form the accomplished tragedian, may be drawn from part of a dialogue which occurs between *Richard the Third* and *Buckingham*:—

“ *Glo.* Come, cousin, *can'st thou quake and change thy colour ?  
Murther thy breath in middle of a word ?  
And then again begin, and stop again,  
As if thou wert distraught, and mad with terror ?*  
*Buck.* Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian ;  
Speak, and look big, and pry on every side,  
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,  
Intending deep suspicion : *ghastly looks  
Are at my service, like enforced smiles.*” \*

It would be highly interesting to be able to point out what were the characters which Shakspeare performed, either in his own plays, or in those of other writers ; but the information which we have on this subject is, unfortunately, very scanty. Mr. Rowe has mentioned, as the sole result of his enquiries, that the *Ghost* in *Hamlet* was his *chef d'oeuvre*. That this part, however, in the opinion of the poet, required some skill and management in the execution, is evident from the expressions attributed to Hamlet, who exclaims, on the appearance of the Royal spectre, during the interview between himself and his mother,—

————— “ Look you how pale he glares !  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xiv. p. 403, 404. Act iii. sc. 5.

Would make them capable. Do not look upon me,  
Lest with *this piteous action*, you convert  
My stern effects;" \*

a description, which, there is reason to suppose, the author would not have ventured to introduce, unless he had been conscious of the possession of powers capable of doing justice to his own delineation.

Another tradition, preserved by Mr. Oldys, and communicated to him, as Mr. Malone thinks †, by Mr. Thomas Jones of Tarbick, in Worcestershire, whom we have formerly mentioned, imports, as corrected by the commentator just mentioned, that a *relation* of the poet's, then in advanced age, but who in his youth had been in the habit of visiting London for the purpose of seeing him act in some of his own plays, told Mr. Jones ‡, that he had a faint recollection "of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song." § That this part was the character of *Adam*, in *As You Like It*, there can be no doubt, and if we add, that, from the arrangement of the names of the actors and of the persons of the drama, prefixed to Ben Jonson's play of *Every Man in his Humour*, first acted in 1598, there is reason to imagine that he performed the part of Old Knowell in that comedy, we may be warranted probably in drawing the conclusion, that the representation of aged characters was peculiarly his forte.

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 249, 250. Act iii. sc. 4.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 128. note 1.

‡ "Mr. Jones's informer," observes Mr. Malone, "might have been Mr. Richard Quiney, who lived in London, and died at Stratford in 1656, at the age of 69; or Mr. Thomas Quiney, our poet's son-in-law, who lived, I believe, till 1663, and was twenty-seven years old when his father-in-law died; or some one of the family of Hathaway. Mr. Thomas Hathaway, I believe Shakspeare's brother-in-law, died at Stratford in 1654-5, at the age of 85." — Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 128. note 1.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 129, 130.



It appears also, from the first four lines of a small poem, written by John Davies, about the year 1611, and inscribed, *To our English Terence, Mr. William Shakespeare*, that our bard had been accustomed to perform *kingly parts* ;

“ Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,  
Hadst thou not play'd some *kingly parts* in sport,  
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,  
And been a king among the meaner sort ;” \*

a passage which leads us to infer, that several of the regal characters in his own plays, perhaps the parts of King Henry the Eighth, King Henry the Sixth, and King Henry the Fourth, may have been appropriated to him, as adapted to the general estimate of his powers in acting.

From the notices thus collected, it will be perceived, that Shakespeare attempted not the performance of characters of the first rank ; but that in the representation of those of a second-rate order, to which he modestly confined his exertions, he was deemed *excellent*. We have just grounds also for concluding that of the *theory* of acting in its very highest departments, he was a complete master ; and though not competent to carry his own precepts into perfect execution, he was a consummate judge of the attainments and deficiencies of his fellow-comedians, and was accordingly employed to instruct them in his own conception of the parts which they were destined to perform.

It may be considered, indeed, as a most fortunate circumstance for the lovers of dramatic poetry, that our author, in point of execution, did not attain to the loftiest summit of his profession. He would, in that case, it is very probable, have either sate down content with the high reputation accruing to him from this source, or would have found little time for the labours of composition, and consequently we should have been in a great degree, if not altogether, deprived of what now constitute the noblest efforts of human genius.

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\* The Scourge of Folly, by John Davies of Hereford, no date.

## CHAPTER II.

SHAKSPEARE COMMENCES A WRITER OF POETRY, PROBABLY ABOUT THE YEAR 1587, BY THE COMPOSITION OF HIS VENUS AND ADONIS — HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF POLITE LITERATURE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE.

As the first object of Shakspeare must necessarily have been, from the confined nature of his circumstances, to procure employment, it is highly reasonable to conclude that he at first contented himself with the diligent discharge of those duties which fell to his share as an actor of inferior rank. That these, however, were calculated to absorb, for any length of time, a mind so active, ample, and creative, cannot for a moment be credited; and, indeed, we are warranted, by every fair inference, to assert, that, no sooner did he consider his situation at the theatre of Blackfriars as tolerably secured, than he immediately directed his powers to the cultivation of his favourite art — that of poetry.

Of his inclination to this elegant branch of literature, we have an early proof, in the mode of retaliation which he adopted, in consequence of his prosecution by Sir Thomas Lucy; and that the *Venus and Adonis*, “the first heir of his invention,” as he terms it, was commenced, not long subsequent to this period, and shortly after his arrival in town, a little enquiry will induce us to consider as an almost established fact.

It has, indeed, been surmised, by a very intelligent critic, that this poem may have been written while its author “felt the powerful incentive of love,” and consequently “before he had sallied from Stratford;” “certainly,” he adds, “before he was known to \* fame.” The first suggestion we may dismiss as a *mere* supposition; the second must be acknowledged as founded on truth.

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\* Chalmers's Supplemental Apology, p. 269.



All the commentators agree in fixing on the year 1591, as the LATEST period for our author's commencement as a *dramatic poet* : for this obvious reason, that both Greene and Chettle have mentioned him as a writer of plays in 1592, and in such a manner, likewise, as proves that he was *even then* possessed of some degree of *notoriety*, the latter mentioning his "*facetious grace in writing*," and the former, after calling him, "*an upstart crow beautified with our feathers*," and parodying a line from the Third Part of King Henry VI., concludes by telling us, that he "*is in his own conceit the only SHAKE-SCENE in the country* ;" circumstances which have naturally induced the most sagacious critics on our bard to infer, that, thus early to have excited so much envy as this railing accusation evinces, he must without doubt have been a corrector and improver of plays anterior to 1590, and very probably in 1589.

Now, though the first edition of the *Venus and Adonis* was not published until 1593, yet the author's positive declaration, that it was "*the first heir of his invention*," necessarily implies that its *composition* had taken place prior to any poetical attempts for the stage ; and as we have seen, that his arrival in town could not have occurred before 1586 ; that he was then immediately employed as an actor in a very inferior rank ; and that his earliest efforts as a dramatic poet may be attributed to the year 1589 or 1590, it will follow, as a legitimate deduction, if we allow the space of a twelvemonth for his settlement at the theatre, that the composition of this poem, "*the first heir of his invention*," must be given to the interval elapsing between the years 1587 and 1590, a period not too extended, the nature of his other engagements being considered, for the completion of a poem very nearly amounting to twelve hundred lines.

Having thus conducted Shakspeare to his entrance on the career of authorship and fame, it will now be necessary, in conformity with our plan, to take a general and cursory survey of LITERATURE, as it existed in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. The remainder of this chapter will therefore be devoted to a broad outline on this subject, reserving, however, the topics of Romance and Miscellaneous Poetry,



for distinct and immediately subsequent consideration, as these will form an apposite prelude to an estimate of the patronage which our author enjoyed, to a critique on his poems, and to critical notices of contemporary *miscellaneous* poets, enquiries which, while they embrace, in one view, the merits of Shakspeare as a *miscellaneous* poet, are, at the same time, in their preliminary and collateral branches, in some degree preparatory to his introduction as a *dramatic* writer ; preparatory also to a sketch of the manners, customs, and diversions of the metropolis, during his age, and to a discussion of his transcendent powers as the bard of fancy and of nature.

The literary period of which we are proceeding to give a slight sketch, may be justly considered as the most splendid in our annals ; for in what equal portion of our history can we bring forward three such mighty names as *Spenser*, *Bacon*, and *Shakspeare*, each, in their respective departments, remaining without a rival. As the field, however, is so ample that even to do justice to an outline will require much attention to arrangement, it will be necessary to distribute what we have to offer, in this stage of our work, under the heads of *Bibliography*, *Philology*, *Criticism*, *History*, General, Local, and Personal, and *Miscellaneous Literature* ; premising that as we confine ourselves, in the strictest sense, to *elegant* literature, or what has been termed the *Belles Lettres*, science, theology, and politics, will, of course, be excluded.

Literature, which had for some centuries been confined to ecclesiastics and scholars by profession, was, at the commencement of Elizabeth's reign, thrown open to the higher classes of general society. The example was given by the Queen herself ; and the nobility, the superior orders of the gentry, and even their wives and daughters, became enthusiasts in the cause of letters. The novelty which attended these studies, the eager desire to possess what had been so long studiously and jealously concealed, and the curiosity to explore and rifle the treasures of the Greek and Roman world, which mystery and imagination had swelled into the marvellous, contributed to excite an absolute passion for study, and for books.



The court, the ducal castle, and the baronial hall, were suddenly converted into academies, and could boast of splendid libraries, as well as of splendid tapestries. In the first of these, according to Ascham, might be seen the Queen reading “ more *Greeke* every day, than some prebendarie of this church doth read *Latin* in a whole week \*,” and while she was translating Isocrates or Seneca, it may be easily conceived that her maids of honour found it convenient to praise and to adopt the disposition of her time. In the second, observes Warton, the daughter of a duchess was taught not only to distil strong waters, but to construe Greek †; and in the third, every young lady who aspired to be fashionable was compelled, in imitation of the greater world, to exhibit similar marks of erudition.

If such were the studious manners of the ladies, it will readily be credited, that an equal, if not a greater attachment to literature existed in the other sex; in short, an intimacy with Greek, Latin, and Italian, was deemed essential to the character of the nobleman and the courtier; and learning was thus rendered a passport to promotion and rank. That this is not an exaggerated statement, but founded on contemporary authority, will be evident from a passage in Harrison’s *Description of England*, where, after delineating the court, he adds, — “ This further is not to be omitted, to the singular commendation of both sorts and sexes of our courtiers here in England, that there are verie few of them, which have not the use and skill of sundrie speaches, beside an excellent veine of writing before time not regarded. — Trulie it is a rare thing with us now, to heare of a courtier which hath but his owne language. And to saie how many gentlewomen and ladies there are, that beside sound knowledge of the *Greeke* and *Latine* toongs, are thereto no lesse skilfull in the *Spanish*, *Italian*, and *French*, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me: sith I am persuaded, that as the noblemen and gentlemen do surmount in this behalfe, so these come verie little or nothing at

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\* Ascham’s Works, Bennet’s edit. p. 242. speaking of Windsor.

† Warton’s History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 491.

all behind them for their parts, which industrie God continue, and accomplish that which otherwise is wanting!" Again, a few lines below, he remarks of the ladies of the court, that some of them employ themselves "in continuall reading either of the holie scriptures, or histories of our owne or forren nations about us, and diverse in writing volumes of their owne, or translating of other mens into our English and Latine toongs\*," employments which now appear to us very extraordinary as the daily occupations of a court, but were, then, the natural result of that ardent love of letters, which had somewhat suddenly been diffused through the higher classes.

Were we, however, to conclude, that the same erudite taste pervaded the bulk of the people, or even the middle orders of society, we should be grossly mistaken. Literature, though cultivated with enthusiasm in the metropolis, was confined even there to persons of high rank, or to those who were subservient to their education and amusement. In the country, to read and write were still esteemed rare accomplishments, and among the rural gentry of not the first degree, little difference, in point of literary information, was perceptible between the master and his menial attendant. Of this several of the plays of Shakspeare and Jonson will afford evidence, especially the comedies of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Every Man in his Humour*, to which a striking proof may be added from Burton, who wrote just at the close of the Shaksperian † period; and, in treating of study, as a cause of melancholy, says, "I may not deny, but that we have a sprinkling of our Gentry, here, and there one, excellently well learned; — but they are but few in respect of the multitude, the major part (and some again excepted, that are indifferent) are wholly bent for Hawks and Hounds, and carried away many times with intemperate lust, gaming, and drinking. If they read a book at any time, 'tis an English Chronicle, Sir Huon of Bordeaux, Amadis de Gaul, &c. a play-book, or some pamphlet of

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\* Holinshed's Chronicles, edit. 1807, vol. i. p. 330.

† The 1st edit. of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy was published in 1617.



News, and that at such seasons only, when they cannot stir abroad, to drive away time, their sole discourse is dogs, hawks, horses, and what News? If some one have been a traveller in Italy, or as far as the Emperour's Court, wintered in Orleance, and can court his mistress in broken French, wear his clothes neatly in the newest fashion, sing some choice out-landish tunes, discourse of lords, ladies, towns, palaces, and cities, he is compleat and to be admired: otherwise he and they are much at one; *no difference betwixt the master and the man*, but worshipful titles: wink and choose betwixt him that sits down (clothes excepted) and him that holds the trencher behind him." \*

It is to the court, therefore, and its attendants, to the nobility, higher gentry, and their preceptors, that we are to look for that ardent love of books and learning which so remarkably distinguished the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and which was destined, in another century, to descend into, and illuminate the larger masses of our population. Nothing, indeed, can more forcibly paint Elizabeth's passion for books and learning, than a passage in Harrison's unadorned but faithful description of her court: — "Finallie," says that interesting pourtrayer of ancient manners, "to avoid idlenesse, and prevent sundrie transgressions, otherwise likelie to be committed and doone, such order is taken, that everie office hath either a bible, or the booke of the acts and monuments of the church of England, or both, beside some histories and chronicles lieing therein, for the exercise of such as come into the same: *whereby the stranger that entereth into the court of England upon the sudden, shall rather imagine himselfe to come into some publike schoole of the universities, where manie give eare to one that readeth, than into a princes palace, if you conferre the same with those of other nations.* Would to God all honorable personages would take example of hir graces godlie dealing in this behalfe, and shew their conformitie unto these hir so good beginnings! which if they would, then should manie grievous offenses (wherewith God is

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\* Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, fol. edit. p. 84.

highlie displeased) be cut off and restrained, which now doo reigne exceedinglye, in most noble and gentlemen's houses, whereof they see no paterne within hir graces gates." \* Well might Mr. Dibdin apostrophize this learned Queen in the following picturesque and characteristic terms: — " All hail to the sovereign, who, bred up in severe habits of reading and meditation, loved books and scholars to the very bottom of her heart! I consider ELIZABETH as a royal bibliomaniac of transcendant fame! — I see her, in imagination, wearing her favorite little *Volume of Prayers*†, the composition of Queen Catharine Parr, and Lady Tirwit, 'bound in solid gold, and hanging by a gold chain at her side,' at her morning and evening devotions — afterwards, as she became firmly seated upon her throne, taking an interest in the embellishments of the *Prayer Book*‡, which goes under her own name; and then indulging her strong bibliomaniacal appetites in fostering the institution for the erecting of a *Library, and an Academy for the study of Antiquities and History.*" §

\* Holinshed's Chronicles, vol. i. p. 331.

† " The reader is referred to an account of a precious bound diminutive godly book (once belonging to Q. Elizabeth), in the first volume of my edition of the *British Typographical Antiquities*, p. 83.; for which, I understand, the present owner asks the sum of 150*l.* We find that in the 16th year of Elizabeth's reign, she was in possession of ' One Gospell booke, covered with tissue and garnished on th' inside with the crucifix and the Queene's badges of silver guilt, poiz with wodde, leaves and all, cxij oz.' Archæologia, vol. xiii. 221.

" I am in possession of the covers of a book, bound (A.D. 1569) in thick parchment or vellum, which has the whole length portrait of Luther on one side, and of Calvin on the other. These portraits, which are executed with uncommon spirit and accuracy, are encircled with a profusion of ornamental borders of the most exquisite taste and richness." *Bibliomania*, p. 158.

‡ " In the PRAYER BOOK which goes by the name of QUEEN ELIZABETH's, there is a portrait of Her Majesty kneeling upon a superb cushion, with elevated hands, in prayer. This book was first printed in 1575; and is decorated with wood-cut borders of considerable spirit and beauty; representing, among other things, some of the subjects of Holbein's Dance of Death."

§ Dibdin's *Bibliomania*, 2d edit. 1811, p. 329—331. This book, the most fascinating which has ever been written on Bibliography, is already scarce. It is composed in the highest tone of enthusiasm for the art, and its dialogue and descriptions are given with a mellowness, a warmth and raciness, which absolutely fix and enchant the reader.



The example of Elizabeth, whose taste for books had been fostered under the tuition of Ascham, was speedily followed by some of the first characters in the kingdom ; but by none with more ardent zeal than by Archbishop Parker, who was such an indefatigable admirer and collector of curious and precious books, and of every thing that appertained to them, that, according to Strype, he kept constantly in his house “ drawers of pictures, wood-cutters, painters, limners, writers, and book-binders, — one of these was *Lylye*, an excellent writer, that could counterfeit any antique writing. Him the archbishop customarily used to make old books compleat.” \* No expense, in short, was spared, by this amiable and accomplished divine, in procuring the most rare and valuable articles ; his library was daily increased through the medium of numerous agents, whom he employed, both at home and abroad, and among these was Batman the author of the *Doom* and the commentator *uppon Bartholome*, who, we are told, purchased for him not less than 6700 books “ in the space of no more than four years.” †

To Parker succeeded the still more celebrated names of *Sir Robert Cotton* and *Sir Thomas Bodley*, men to whom the nation is indebted for two of the most extensive and valuable of its public libraries. The enthusiasm which animated these illustrious characters in their bibliographical researches is almost incredible, and what gives an imperishable interest to their biography is, that their morals were as pure as their literary zeal was glowing.

Sir Thomas Bodley was singularly fortunate in the selection of *Dr. Thomas James* for the keeper of his library, whom Camden terms *vir eruditus, et vere φιλόελες* ‡, and of whom Fuller says, that “ on serious consideration one will conclude the Library made for *him*, and *him* for it, like *tallies* they so fitted one another. Some men live like mothes in libraries, not being better for the books, but the books the worse for them, which they only soile with their fingers. Not

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\* Strype's *Life of Parker*, p. 415. 529.

† *Ibid.* p. 528.

‡ *Britannia in Monmouthshire.*

so Dr. James, who made use of books for his own and the publique good. He knew the age of a manuscript, by looking upon the face thereof, and by the form of the character could conclude the time wherein it was written." \*

Among the lovers and collectors of curious books, during the reign of Elizabeth, may be mentioned Dr. JOHN DEE, notorious for his magical and astrological lore, and who, according to his own account, possessed a library of "four thousand volumes, printed and unprinted, bound and unbound, valued at 2000*l.*," beside numerous boxes and cases of very rare evidences Irish and Welsh †; and *Captain Cox of Coventry*, whose boudoir of romances and ballads we shall have occasion to notice, at some length, in the succeeding chapter.

It is remarkable that the two sovereigns included in the era of Shakspeare, should have felt an equally unbounded inclination to study and to books. So attached was James to bibliothecal delights, that when he visited the Bodleian Library in 1605, he is said by Burton to have exclaimed on his departure, "*if it were so that I must be a prisoner, if I might have my wish, I would desire to have no other prison than this library, and to be chained together with so many good authors.*" ‡ Burton himself was one of the most inveterate bibliomaniacs of his day; Hearne tells us that he was a collector of "ancient popular little pieces," which, together with a multitude of books of the best kind, he gave to the Bodleian Library. § In the preface to his curious folio, he speaks of his eyes aking with reading, and his fingers with turning the leaves ||; and in the body of his work, under the article of study, he expatiates, in the highest strain of enthusiasm, on the luxury of possessing numerous books: "we have thousands of authors of all sorts," he observes; "many great libraries full well furnished, like so many dishes of meat, served out for several palates:

\* Fuller's Worthies, part ii. p. 13.

† Vide Dibdin's Bibliomania, p. 347, 348.

‡ Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 177. 8th edit. folio.

§ Vide Hearne's Benedictus, Abbas, p. iv.

|| Anatomy of Melancholy, Democritus to the Reader, p. 5.



and he is a very block that is affected with none of them. — I could even live and dye with — and take more delight, true content of mind in them, than thou hast in all thy wealth and sport, how rich soever thou art. — Nicholas Gerbelius, that good old man, was so much ravished with a few Greek authors restored to light, with hope and desire of enjoying the rest, that he exclaims forthwith, Arabibus atque Indis omnibus erimus ditiores, We shall be richer than all the Arabick or Indian Princes; of such esteem they were with him, in comparable worth and value.” — He then adopts the emphatic language of *Heinsius*: “ *I no sooner come into the Library, but I bolt the door to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is idleness, their mother Ignorance, and Melancholy herself, and in the very lap of eternity, amongst so many divine souls, I take my seat, with so lofty a spirit and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones, and rich men that know not this happiness. I am not ignorant in the mean time,*” he adds, “ notwithstanding this which I have said, how barbarously and basely for the most part our *ruder Gentry* esteem of libraries and books, how they neglect and contemn so great a treasure, so inestimable a benefit. — For my part I pity these men, — how much, on the other side, are all we bound that are scholars, to those munificent *Ptolomies*, bountiful *Mæcenates*, heroical patrons, divine spirits, — *qui nobis hæc otia fecerunt, Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus* — that have provided for us so many well furnished libraries as well in our publick Academies in most cities, as in our private Colledges? How shall I remember *Sir Thomas Bodley*, amongst the rest, *Otho Nicholson*, and the right reverend *John Williams* Lord Bishop of *Lincolne*, (with many other pious acts) who besides that at *St. John’s* College in *Cambridge*, that in *Westminster*, is now likewise in *Fieri* with a Library at *Lincolne* (a noble president for all corporate towns and cities to imitate) *O quam te memorem (vir illustrissime) quibus elogiis?*” \*

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\* Anatomy of Melancholy, p. 176, 177.

The passion for letters and for books, which was thus diffused among the higher classes, necessarily occasioned much attention to be paid to the preservation and decoration of libraries, the volumes of which, however, were not arranged on the shelves in the manner that we are now accustomed to see them. The *leaves*, and not the back, were placed in front, in order to exhibit the *silk strings* or *golden clasps* which united the sides of the cover. Thus Bishop Earl, describing the character of a young gentleman of the University, says, — “ His study has commonly handsome shelves, his books neat silk strings, *which he shews to his father’s man, and is loth to unty or take down for fear of misplacing.*” \*

To the most costly of these embellishments, the *golden clasps*, Shakspeare has referred, both in a metaphorical and literal sense. In the *Twelfth Night* the Duke, addressing the supposed Cesario, exclaims —

“ I have *unclasp’d*  
To thee the *book* even of my secret soul;” †

and in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lady Capulet observes,

“ That book in many’s eyes doth share the glory,  
That in *gold clasps* locks in the golden story.” ‡

It appears, indeed, that the art of ornamenting the exterior of books was carried, at this period, to a lavish extent, jewels, as well as gold, being employed to enhance their splendour. Let us listen to the directions of the judicious Peacham, on this head, a contemporary authority, who has thought it not unnecessary to subjoin the best mode of keeping books, and the best scite for a library. “ Have a care,” says he, “ of keeping your bookes handsome, and well bound, not casting away over much in their gilding or stringing for ostentation sake, like the prayer-bookes of girles and gallants, which

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\* Earl’s *Microcosmography*, p. 74.

† Reed’s *Shakspeare*, vol. v. p. 257, 258. Act i. sc. 4.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. xx. p. 43. Act i. sc. 3.



are carried to Church but for their out-sides. Yet for your owne use spare them not for noting or interlining (if they be printed) for it is not likely you meane to be a gainer by them, when you have done with them : neither suffer them through negligence to mold and be moath-eaten, or want their strings or covers. — Suffer them not to lye neglected, who must make you regarded ; and goe in torn coates, who must apparell your mind with the ornaments of knowledge, above the roabes and riches of the most magnificent Princes.

“ To avoyde the inconvenience of moathes and moldinesse, let your study be placed, and your windowes open if it may be, towards the East, for where it looketh South or West, the aire being ever subject to moisture, moathes are bred and darkishnesse encreased, whereby your maps and pictures will quickly become pale, loosing their life and colours, or rotting upon their cloath, or paper, decay past all helpe and recovery.” \*

The interior, also, as well as the exterior, of books, had acquired a high degree of richness and finishing during the era of which we are treating. The black-letter, Roman, and Italic, types were, in general, clear, sharp, and strong, and though the splendid art of illumination had ceased to be practised, in the sixteenth century, in consequence of the establishment of printing, the loss was compensated for, by more correct ornamental capital initials, cut with great taste and spirit on wood and copper, and by engraved *borders* and *title-pages*. Portraits were also frequently introduced in the initials, especially by the celebrated printers Jugge, and Day, the latter of whom, patronised by Archbishop Parker, became in his turn the patron of Fox the martyrologist, in the first edition of whose book, 1563, and in Day's edition of Dee's *General and Rare Memorials pertayning to the perfecte Arte of Navigation*, folio, 1577, may be found an admirable specimen of this style of decoration, the capital initial C including a portrait of Elizabeth sitting in state, and attended by three of her ministers. † A similar mode of costly ornamenture issued from the

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\* The Compleat Gentleman, 2d edit. p. 54, 55.

† Dibdin's Typographical Antiquities, Preliminary Disquisition, p. 35.



presses of Grafton, Whitchurch, Bill, and Barker, and perhaps in no period of *our* annals has this species of decorative typography been carried to a higher state of perfection. Some very grotesque ornaments, it is true, and some degree of affectation were occasionally exhibited in title-pages, and to one of the latter class, very common in this age, Shakspeare alludes in the *Second Part of King Henry IV.*, where Northumberland, describing the approach of a messenger, says,

— “ This man’s brow, like to a title-leaf,  
Foretells the nature of a tragick volume;”\*

imagery drawn from the custom of printing elegiac poems with the title-page, and every intermediate leaf, entirely black; but, upon the whole, valuable books, and especially the Bible, had more splendid and minutely ornamental finishing bestowed upon their pages, than has since occurred, in this country, until towards the close of the eighteenth century.

It had been fortunate, if *accuracy* in typography had kept pace with the taste for decoration; but this, with few exceptions, may be said never to have been the case, and about the termination of Elizabeth’s reign, the era of total incorrectness, as Mr. Steevens remarks, commenced, when “ works of all kinds appeared with the disadvantage of more than their natural and inherent imperfections †;” an assertion sufficiently borne out by the state in which the dramatic poetry of this period was published. It may be added that the Black-letter continued to be the prevailing type during the days of Elizabeth, but seems to have nearly deserted the English press before the demise of her successor.

Of what extent was the Library of Shakspeare, and of what its chief treasures consisted, can now only be the subject of conjecture. That he was a lover and collector of books more particularly within the pale of his own language, and in the range of elegant literature, is sufficiently evidenced by his own works. A *Bibliotheca Shakspeariana* may, in fact, be drawn, from the industry of his commentators, who

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\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 13.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 44, 45.



have sought for, and quoted, almost every book to which he has been directly or remotely indebted. The disquisitions indeed into which we are about to enter will pretty accurately point out the species of books which principally ornamented his shelves, and may preclude any other remark here, than that the chief wealth of his collection consisted of Historic, Romantic, and Poetic Literature, in all their various branches.

*Philological* or grammatical literature, as applied to the English language, appears to have made little progress until after the middle of the sixteenth century. We are told by Roger Ascham in 1544, the period of the publication of his *Toxophilus*, that "as for the Latine or Greeke tongue, everye thinge is so excellentlye done in them, that none can do better; in the *Englishe* tongue, contrary, everye thinge in a maner so meanlye both for the matter and handeling, that no man can do worse. For therein the least learned, for the most part, have bene alwayes most readye to write." \* The *Toxophilus* of this useful and engaging writer, was written in his native tongue, with the view of presenting the public with a specimen of a purer and more correct *English* style than that to which they had hitherto been accustomed; and with the hope of calling the attention of the learned, from the exclusive study of the Greek and Latin, to the cultivation of their vernacular language. The result which he contemplated was attained, and, from the period of this publication, the shackles of Latinity were broken, and composition in *English* prose became an object of eager and successful attention.

Previous to the exertions of Ascham, very few writers can be mentioned as affording any model for English style. If we except the Translation of Froissart by Bouchier, Lord Berners, in 1523, and the History of Richard III. by Sir Thomas More, certainly compositions of great merit, we shall find it difficult to produce an author of much value for his vernacular prose. On the contrary, very soon after the appearance of the *Toxophilus*, we find harmony and beauty

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\* Ascham's Works, Bennet's edit. p. 57.



in English style emphatically praised and enjoined. Thus, in *THE ARTE OF RHETORIKE for the use of all suche as are studious of Eloquence, sette forth in Englishe by THOMAS WILSON, 1553*, we are informed that many now aspired to write English elegantly. "When we have learned," remarks this critic, "usuall and accustomable wordes to set forthe our meanyng, we ought to joyne them together in apte order, that the eare maie delite in hearynge the harmonie. I knowe some Englishemen, that in this point have suche a gift in the Englishe as fewe in Latin have the like; and therefore delite the Wise and Learned so muche with their pleasaunte composition, that many rejoyce when thei maie heare suche, and thinke muche learnyng is gotte when thei maie talke with them."\* The *Treatise* of Wilson powerfully assisted the cause which Ascham had been advocating; it displays much sagacity and good sense, and greatly contributed to clear the language from the affectation consequent on the introduction of foreign words and idiom. The licentiousness, in this respect, was carried, indeed, at this time, to such a height, that those who affected more than ordinary refinement, either in conversation or writing, so Italianated or Latinized their English, as to be scarcely intelligible to the common people. Wilson severely satirizes this absurd practice. "Some," says he, "seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that they forget altogether their mother's language. And I dare sweare this, if some of their mothers were alive, thei were not able to tel what thei saie: and yet these fine Englishe clerkes wil saie thei speake in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them for counterfeityng the kinges Englishe. — He that cometh lately out of Fraunce, will talke Frenche Englishe, and never blushe at the matter. Another choppes in with Englishe Italianated, and applieth the Italian phraise to our Englishe speakyng. — The unlearned or folishe phantasticall, that smelles but of learnyng (suche fellowes as have seene learned men in their daies)

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\* Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorike*, fol. 85, 86.



will so Latine their tongues, that the simple cannot but wonder at their talke, and thinke surely thei speake by some revelacion. I know them, that thinke Rhetorike to stande wholie upon darke wordes; and he that can catche an ynkehorne terme by the taile, hym thei compt to be a fine Englishman and a good rhetorician." He then adds a specimen of this style from a letter "devised by a Lincolneshire man for a voide benefice," addressed to the Lord Chancellor:—"Pondering, expending, and revoluting with myself, your ingent affabilitie, and ingenious capacitie, for mundane affaires, I cannot but celebrate and extoll your magnificall dexteritie above all other. For how could you have adapted suche illustrate prerogative, and dominiall superioritie, if the fecunditie of your ingenie had not been so fertile and wonderfull prenaunt, &c."\* That the same species of pedantry continued to prevail in 1589, we have the testimony of Puttenham, who, in his chapter *Of Language*, observes that "we finde in our English writers many wordes and speaches amenable, and ye shall see in some many *inkhorne* termes so ill affected brought in by men of learning as preachers and schoole-masters: and many straunge termes of other languages by Secretaries and Marchaunts and travailours, and many darke wordes and not usual nor well sounding, though they be dayly spok in Court."†

Before Puttenham, however, had published, another and a still more dangerous mode of corruption had infected English composition. In 1581, John Lilly, a dramatic poet, published a Romance in two parts, of which the first is entitled, *Euphues*, The Anatomy of Wit, and the second, *Euphues and his England*. This production is a tissue of anitithesis and alliteration, and therefore justly entitled to the appellation of *affected*; but we cannot with Berkenhout consider it as a most *contemptible piece of nonsense*.‡ The moral is uniformly good; the vices and follies of the day are attacked with much force and keenness; there is in it much display of the manners of the times, and though,

\* Wilson, book iii. fol. 82.

† Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, reprint, p. 121.

‡ Berkenhout's *Biographia Literaria*, p. 377. note *a*.

as a composition, it is very meretricious, and sometimes absurd in point of ornament, yet the construction of its sentences is frequently turned with peculiar neatness and spirit, though with much monotony of cadence. William Webbe, no mean judge, speaking of those who had attained a good grace and sweet vein in eloquence, adds, — “ among whom I think there is none that will gainsay but Master John Lilly hath deserved most high commendations, as he who hath stepped one step farther therein than any since he first began the witty discourse of his *EUPHUES*, whose works surely in respect of his singular eloquence and brave composition of apt words and sentences, let the learned examine, and make a tryal thereof through all parts of rhetoric in fit phrases, in pithy sentences, in gallant tropes, in flowing speech, in plain sense; and surely in my judgment I think he will yield him that verdict, which Quintilian giveth of both the best orators, Demosthenes and Tully; that from the one nothing may be taken away, and to the other nothing may be added \*;” an encomium that was repeated by Nash †, Lodge ‡, and Meres §, but which should be contrasted with the sounder opinion of Drayton, who, in his *Epistle of Poets and Poesy*, mentioning the noble Sidney,

“ That heroe for numbers and for prose,”

observes that he

—— “ thoroughly pac’d our language as to show  
The plenteous English hand in hand might go  
With Greek and Latin, and did first reduce  
Our tongue from *Lilly’s* writing then in use;  
Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies,  
Playing with words, and idle similies,  
As th’ English apes, and very zanies be  
Of every thing, that they do hear and see,

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\* Webbe’s *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 4to. 1586. Vide Oldys’s *British Librarian*, p. 90. from which this quotation is given.

† *Apology of Pierce Pennilesse*, 4to. 1593.

‡ *Wit’s Miserie and Word’s Madness*, 4to. 1596, p. 57.

§ *Palladis Tamia, Wits Trensurie*, being the second part of *Wit’s Commonwealth*, 1598. Meres terms him “ eloquent and wittie John Lillie.”



So imitating his ridiculous tricks,  
They speak and write, all like mere lunatics." \*

Yet the most correct description of the merits and defects of this once celebrated author has been given by Oldys, in his *Librarian*, who remarks that "Lilly was a man of great reading, good memory, ready faculty of application, and uncommon eloquence; but he ran into a vast excess of allusion; in sentence and conformity of style he seldom speaks directly to the purpose, but is continually carried away by one odd allusion or simile or other (out of natural history, that is yet fabulous and not true in nature), and that still overborne by more, thick upon the back of one another; and through an eternal affectation of sententiousness keeps to such a formal measure of his periods as soon grows tiresome; and so, by confining himself to shape his sense so frequently into one artificial cadence, however ingenious or harmonious, abridges that variety which the style should be admired for." †

So greatly was the style of *Euphues* admired in the court of Elizabeth, and, indeed, throughout the kingdom, that it became a proof of refined manners to adopt its phraseology. Edward Blount, who republished six of Lilly's plays, in 1632, under the title of *Six Court Comedies*, declares that "Our nation are in his debt for a new English which hee taught them. *Euphues* and his *England*," he adds, "began first that language. All our ladies were then his scollers; and that beautie in court who could not parley *Euphuesme*, was as little regarded as shee which now there speakes not French;" a representation certainly not exaggerated; for Ben Jonson, describing, a fashionable lady, makes her address her gallant in the following terms: — "O master Brisk, (as it is in *Euphues*) *hard is the choice when one is compell'd, either by silence to die with grief, or by speaking, to live with shame:*" upon which Mr. Whalley observes, that the court ladies in Elizabeth's time had all the phrases of *Euphues by heart*. ‡

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\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 399.

† *British Librarian*, p. 90. et seq.

‡ Whalley's Works of Ben Jonson: *Every Man Out of His Humour*, act v. sc. 10.

Scarcely had corruption from this source ceased to violate the purity and propriety of our language, when the fashion of interlarding composition with a perpetual series of Latin quotations commenced; a custom which continued until the close of the reign of James, and gave to the style of this period a complexion the most heterogeneous and absurd, being, in fact, composed of two languages, half Latin and half English. Of this barbarous and pedantic habit, the works of Bishop Andrews afford the most flagrant instance; an example which, we have reason to regret, was followed too closely by Robert Burton, who, when he trusts to his native tongue, has written in a style at once simple and impressive.

These affectations, arising from the use of *inkhorn terms*, of *antithesis*, *alliteration*, arbitrary orthography, and the *perpetual intermixture of Latin phraseology*, have been deservedly and powerfully ridiculed by Sir Philip Sidney and Shakspeare; by the former under the character of *Rombus*, a village schoolmaster, in a masque presented to Her Majesty in Wansted Garden, and by the latter in the person of HOLOFERNES in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The satire of Sir Philip is supported with humour; Her Majesty is supposed to have parted, by her presence, a violent contest between two shepherds for the affection of the Lady of the May, on which event *Rombus* comes forward with a learned oration.

“ Now the thunder-thumping *Jove* transfused his dotes into your excellent formositie, which have with your resplendent beames thus segregated the enmity of these rurall animals; I am *Potentissima Domina*, a Schoole-master, that is to say, a Pedagogue, one not a little versed in the disciplinating of the juvenall frie, wherein (to my laud I say it) I use such geometrical proportions, as neither wanted mansuetude nor correction, for so it is described.

“ *Parcare subjectos, et debellare superbos.*”

“ Yet hath not the pulchritude of my vertues protected me from the contaminating hands of these Plebeians; for coming *solummodo*, to have parted their sanguinolent fray, they yeilded me no more



reverence, than if I had been some *Pecorius Asinus*. I, even I, that am, who am I? *Dixi verbus sapiento satum est*. But what said that Trojan *Æneas*, when he sojourned in the surging sulkes of the sandiferous seas, *Hæc olim memonasse juvebit*. Well, well, *ad propositos reverteto*, the puritie of the verity is that a certaine *Pulchra puella profecto*, elected and constituted by the integrated determination of all this topographicall region as the soveraigne Ladie of this Dame Maies month, hath beene *quodammodo* hunted, as you would say, pursued by two, a brace, a couple, a cast of young men, to whom the crafty coward *Cupid* had *inquam* delivered his dire-dolorous dart ;” here the May-Lady interfering calls him a tedious fool, and dismisses him ; upon which in anger he exclaims, —

“ *O Tempori, O Moribus !* in profession a childe, in dignitie a woman, in yeares a Ladie, in *cæteris* a maide, should thus turpifie the reputation of my doctrine, with the superscription of a foole, *O Tempori, O Moribus !*\*

The Schoolmaster of Shakspeare appears, from the researches of Warburton and Dr. Farmer, to have been intended as a satire upon John Florio, whose *First Fruits*, or Dialogues in Italian and English, were published in 1578, his *Second* in 1591, and his “*Worlde of Wordes*” in 1598. He was ludicrously pedantic, dogmatic, and assuming, and gave the first affront to the dramatic poets of his day, by affirming that “the plaies that they plaie in England, are neither *right comedies*, nor *right tragedies* ; but representations of *histories* without any decorum.”† The character of *Holofernes*, however, while it caricatures the peculiar folly and ostentation of Florio, holds up to ridicule, at the same time, the general pedantry and literary affectations of the age ; and amongst these very particularly the absurd innovations which Lilly had introduced. Sir Nathaniel, praising the specimen of alliteration which *Holofernes* exhibits in his “extemporal epitaph,” calls it “a rare talent ;” upon which the

\* Sir Philip Sidney's Works, 7th edit., 1629, fol., p. 619, 620.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 86. note.



schoolmaster comments on the compliment in a manner which pretty accurately describes the fantastic genius of the author of *Euphues*: — “ This is a gift that I have, simple, simple ; a *foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions* : these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater* ; and deliver’d upon the mellowing of occasion ;” and subsequently in a strain of good sense not very common from the mouth of this imperious pedant, he still more definitely points out the foppery of Lilly both in style and pronunciation, — “ He is too picked,” he remarks, “ too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it. — He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasms, such insociable and point devise companions ; such rackers of orthography, as to speak, dout, fine, when he should say, doubt ; det, when he should pronounce, debt ; d, e, b, t ; not d, e, t : he clepeth a calf, cauf ; half, hauf ; neighbour, *vocatur* nebour ; neigh, abbreviated, ne : This is abhominable, (which he would call abominable,) it insinuateth me of insanie ; *Ne intelligis domine ?* to make frantick, lunatick.” \*

Yet, notwithstanding these various attempts, all tending to corrupt the purity of our language, and originating from the pedantic taste of the age, and from a love of novelty and over-refinement, English style more rapidly improved during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, than has been the case in any previous, or subsequent period of our annals. To establish this assertion, we have only to appeal to the great writers of this era, and among these, it will be sufficient to mention the names of *Raleigh, Hooker, Bacon* and *Daniel*, masters of a style, at once vigorous, perspicuous, and often richly modulated. If to this brief catalogue, though adequate to our purpose, we add the prose of *Ascham, Sidney, Southwell, Knolles, Hakewell, and Peacham*, still omitting many authors of much merit, it may justly be affirmed, that no specimens of excellence in dignified and serious

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 93. 134.



composition could be wanting as exemplars. That the good sense of the age was aware of the value of these writers, in point of style, though surrounded by innovations supported by rank and fashion, may be concluded from the admonitions of Peacham, who in his chapter "Of stile, in speaking and writing," not only describes the style which ought to be adopted, but enumerates the authors who have afforded the best examples of it for the student. "Let your style," he admirably observes, "bee furnished with solid matter, and compact of the best, choice, and most familiar words; taking heed of speaking, or writing such words, as men shall rather admire than understand. — Flowing at one and the selfe same height, neither taken in and knit up too short, that, like rich hangings of Arras or Tapisstry, thereby lose their grace and beautie, as Themistocles was wont to say: nor suffered to spread so farre, like soft Musicke in an open field, whose delicious sweetnesse vanisheth, and is lost in the ayre.

"To helpe yourselfe herein, make choice of those authors in prose, who speake the best and purest English. I would commend unto you (though from more antiquity) the Life of *Richard* the third, written by *Sir Thomas Moore*; the *Arcadia* of the noble *Sir Philip Sidney*, whom *Du Bartas* makes one of the foure columnes of our language; the *Essayes*, and other peeces of the excellent master of eloquence, my Lord of *S. Albanes*, who possesseth not onely eloquence, but all good learning, as hereditary both by father and mother. You have then *M. Hooker*, his *Policy: Henry* the fourth, well written by *S. John Heyward*; that first part of our English Kings, by *M. Samuel Daniel*. There are many others I know, but these will tast you best, as proceeding from no vulgar judgment."\*

With regard to the state of colloquial language during this epoch, it may safely be asserted, that a reference to the works of Shakspeare will best acquaint us with the "diction of common life," with the tone of conversation which prevailed both in the higher and lower

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\* Peacham's Compleat Gentleman, 4to. 2d edit. p. 43. 53.

ranks of society ; for the dialogue of his most perfect comedies is, by many degrees, more easy, lively, and perspicuous, than that of any other contemporary dramatic writer.

It is by no means, however, our wish to infer, from what has been said in praise of the prose writers of this period, that they are to be considered as perfect models in the nineteenth century ; on the contrary, it must be confessed, that the best of them exhibit abundant proofs of quaintness and prolixity, of verbal pedantry and inverted phraseology ; and though the language, through their influence, made unparalleled strides, and fully unfolded its copiousness, energy, and strength, it remained greatly deficient in correctness and polish, in selection of words, and harmony of arrangement. \*

These defects, especially the two latter, are to be attributed, in a great measure, to philological studies being almost exclusively confined to the learned languages, a subject of complaint with a few individuals, who lamented the neglect which this classical enthusiasm entailed on their native tongue. Thus Arthur Golding, in some verses prefixed to Baret's *Alviarie*, after observing that

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" all good inditers find  
Our Inglish tung driven almost out of kind,  
Dismembred, hacked, maymed, rent and torne,  
Defaced, patched, mard, and made a skorne,"

adds with great truth and good sense,

" No doubt but men should shortly find there is  
As perfect order, as firm certentie,  
As grounded rules to trie out things amisse,  
As much sweete grace, as great varietie  
Of wordes and phrazes, as good quantitie  
For verse or proze in Inglish every waie,  
As any comen language hath this daie.

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\* For specimens of the prose writers of this period, the introduction of which would be too digressive for the plan of this work, I venture to refer the reader to my *Essays on the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian*, 1805, vol. ii. part 3. Essay II. on the Progress and Merits of English Style; or to *Burnett's Specimens of English Prose-Writers*, vol. ii. 1807.



*And were wée given as well to like our owne,  
 And for to clense it from the noisome wéede  
 Of affectation which hath overgrowne  
 Ungraciously the good and native séede,  
 As for to borrowe where wée have no néede :  
 It would pricke néere the learned tungs in strength,  
 Perchance, and match mée some of them at length.” \**

The ardour for classical acquisition was, at this time, indeed, so prevalent among the learned and the great, that the mythology as well as the diction of the ancients became fashionable. The amusements, and even the furniture of the opulent, their shows, and masques, the hangings and the tapestries of their houses, and their very cookery, assumed an erudite, and what would now be termed, a pedantic cast. “Every thing,” says Warton, speaking of this era, “was tinged with ancient history and mythology. — When the Queen paraded through a country town, almost every pageant was a pantheon. When she paid a visit at the house of any of her nobility, at entering the hall she was saluted by the Penates, and conducted to her privy-chamber by Mercury. Even the pastry-cooks were expert mythologists. At dinner, select transformations of Ovid’s metamorphoses were exhibited in confectionary: and the splendid iceing of an immense historic plumb-cake, was embossed with a delicious basso-relievo of the destruction of Troy. In the afternoon, when she condescended to walk in the garden, the lake was covered with Tritons and Nereids: the pages of the family were converted into Wood-nymphs, who peeped from every bower: and the footmen gamboled over the lawns in the figure of Satyrs.” †

In the course of a few years the same taste descended to the inferior orders of society, owing to the numerous versions which rapidly appeared of the best writers of Greece and Rome. The rich catalogue of translations to which Shakspeare had access, may be

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\* Vide Preface to Baret’s *Alvearie, or Quadruple Dictionary*, English, Latin, Greek, and French, bl. l. folio, London, 1580.

† Warton’s *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 492.

estimated from the very accurate list which is inserted in the Variorum editions of the poet, and before the death of James the First, not a single classic, we believe, of any value, remained unfamiliarized to the English reader.

The height which classical learning had attained about the year 1570, may be estimated from the testimony of Ascham, a most consummate judge, who, quoting Cicero's assertion with regard to Britain, that "there is not one scruple of silver in that whole isle; or any one that knoweth either learnyng or letter\*," thus apostrophizes the Roman Orator:

"But now, master *Cicero*, blessed be God, and his sonne Jesus Christ, whom you never knew, except it were as it pleased him to lighten you by some shadow; as covertlie in one place ye confesse, saying, *Veritatis tantum umbram consecramur* †, as your master Plato did before you: blessed be God, I say, that sixteen hundred yeare after you were dead and gone, it may trewly be sayd, that for silver, there is more comlie plate in one citie of *Englande*, than is in four of the proudest cities in all *Italie*, and take *Rome* for one of them: and for learning, beside the knowledge of all learned tonges and liberal sciences, even your owne bookes, Cicero, be as well read, and your excellent eloquence is as well liked and loved, and as trewly folowed in *Englande* at this day, as it is now, or ever was since your own tyme, in any place of *Italie*, either at Arpinum, where you was borne, or els at Rome, where you was brought up. And a little to brag with you, Cicero, where you yourselfe, by your leave, halted in some point of learning in your own tongue, many in *Englande* at this day go streight up, both in trewe skill, and right doing therein." ‡

Nor can this progress in the learned languages be considered as surprising, when we recollect the vast encouragement given to these

\* Britannici belli exitus expectatur: constat enim aditus insulæ esse munitos mirificis molibus. Etiam illud jam cognitum est, neque argenti scrupulum esse ullum in illa insula, neque ullam spem prædæ, nisi ex mancipiis: ex quibus nullos puto te literis, aut musicis eruditos expectare. Cic. lib. iv. Epist. ad Attic. ep. 16.

† Vide Cic. Offic. lib. iii. cap. 17.

‡ Ascham's Works, Bennet's edit. 4to. p. 333.



studies, not only by the nobility but by the Queen herself; who was, in fact, a most laborious and erudite author, who wrote a Commentary on Plato, translated from the Greek two of the Orations of Isocrates, a play of Euripides, the Hiero of Xenophon, and Plutarch de Curiositate; from the Latin, Sallust de Bello Jugurthino, Horace de Arte Poetica, Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ, a long chorus from the Hercules Œtæus of Seneca, one of Cicero's epistles, and another of Seneca's; who wrote many Latin letters, many English original works, both in prose and poetry, and who spoke five languages with facility.\* The British Solomon, it is well known, was equally zealous and industrious in the cause of learning, and both not only patronized individuals, but founded and endowed public seminaries; Elizabeth was the founder of Westminster-School, and of Jesus-College, Oxford, and to James the University of Edinburgh owes its existence. This laudable spirit was not confined to regal munificence; in 1584, Emanuel-College, Cambridge, rose on the site of the Dominican convent of Black Friars, through the exertions of Sir Walter Mildmay; and in 1594, Sidney-Sussex College, in the same University, sprung from the patronage of the Dowager of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex.

Of the *modern* languages cultivated at this period, the *Italian* took the lead, and became so fashionable at the court of Elizabeth, and among all who had pretensions to refinement, that it almost rivalled the *classical mania* of the day. The Queen spoke it with great purity, and among those who professed to teach it, Florio, whom we have formerly mentioned as the object of Shakspeare's satire, was the most eminent. He was pensioned by Lord Southampton, and on the accession of James, was appointed reader of the Italian language to Queen Anne, with a stipend of 100*l.* a-year.† So popular were the writers of this fascinating country, that the English language was absolutely inundated with versions of the Italian poets and

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\* Park's edition of Lord Orford's Royal and Noble Authors, vol. i. article Elizabeth.

† Chalmers's Apology, p. 218. note.

novellists, a consequence of which Roger Ascham bitterly complains ; for, lamenting the diffusion of Italian licentiousness, he exclaims, — “ These be the inchantmentes of Circe, brought out of *Italie*, to marre men’s maners in *Englande* ; much by example of ill life, but more by precepts of fond books, of late translated out of *Italian* into *Englishe* sold in every shop in London : — there be moe of these ungratious bookes set out in printe within these few monethes, than have been sene in *Englande* many score yeares before. — Then they have in more reverence the triumphes of *Petrarche*, than the Genesis of *Moses* ; they make more account of a tale in *Boccace*, than a storie of the Bible.” \*

It must be allowed, we think, that the censure of Ascham partakes too much of puritanic sourness ; for these “ ungratious bookes ” we find to have been the great classics of Italy, Petrarca, Boccaccio, &c. writers who, though occasionally romantic in their incidents, and gross in their imagery, yet presented many just views of life and manners, and many rich examples of harmonious style and fervid imagination. They contributed also very powerfully by the variety and fertility of their fictions, to stimulate the poets of our country, and especially the dramatic, who have been indebted to this source more than to any other for the ground-work of their plots. It is, indeed, sufficiently honourable to Italian literature, that we shall find our unrivalled Shakspeare occasionally indebted to it for the hints which awakened his muse.

We are not to conclude, however, that the labours of our translators were confined to the poetry and romance of Italy, and that its moral, historical, and didactic compositions were utterly neglected. This was so far from being the case, that most of the esteemed productions in these departments were as speedily naturalized as those of the lighter class ; and among them we may mention two works which must have had no inconsiderable influence in polishing and refining the manners of our countrymen. In 1576, Robert Peterson,

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\* Ascham’s Works, Bennet’s edit. 4to. p. 253. 255, 256.



of Lincolne's-Inn, translated the *Galateo* of John de la Casa, a system of politeness to which Chesterfield has been much indebted\*; and in 1588, Thomas Hobby published a version of the *Cortigiano* of Baldassar Castiglione, a work in equal estimation as a manuel of elegance, and termed by the Italians "the Golden Book."†

The philological attainments of this age, with respect to Greek, Latin, and English, will be placed in a still more compendiously clear light, by a mere enumeration of those who greatly excelled in rendering their acquisition more systematic and correct. Both Greek and English literature were early indebted to the labours of Sir *Thomas Smith*, who was appointed public lecturer at Cambridge on the first of these languages, the study of which he much facilitated by a new method of accentuation and pronunciation; publishing at the same time an improved system of orthography for his native tongue. These useful works were printed together in 4to. in 1568, under the titles of *De recta et emendata linguæ Græcæ pronuntiatione*, and *De recta et emendata linguæ Anglicæ scriptione*.

Another equally eminent Grecian philologer appeared at the same time, in the person of Sir *Henry Savile*, who was Greek preceptor to Elizabeth, warden of Merton-College, and provost of Eton. He was editor of the works of Chrysostom, with notes, in 8 vols. folio, 1613, the most elaborate Greek production which had hitherto issued from an English press: of Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, and of the *Stelitteutici* of Nazianzen. He translated also into English, as early as 1581, the first four books of the *History of Tacitus*, and his *Life of Agri-*

\* "Galateo of Maister John Della Casa, Archbishop of Beneuenta, or rather a treatise of the maners and behaiours it behoveth a man to uze and eschewe, in his familiar conversation. A worke very necessary and profitable for all gentlemen or other. First written in the Italian tongue, and now done into English by Robert Paterson of Lincolnes Inne Gentleman. Satis si sapienter. Imprinted at London for Raufe Newbery, dwelling in Fleete streate, a little above the Conduit. An. Do. 1576. 4to. 68 leaves. b. l."

† "The Courtier of Count Baldessar Castilio, devided into foure bookes. Verie necessarie and profitable for young Gentlemen and Gentlewomen abiding in Court, Pallace, or Place. Done into English by Thomas Hobby. London: Printed by John Wolfe, 1588. 4to. pp. 616."



cola, accompanied by very valuable annotations, which were afterwards published in a Latin version, by Gruter, at Amsterdam.

To his able assistant, also, in editing the works of Chrysostom, the *Rev. John Boys*, much gratitude is due for his enthusiasm in the cause of Grecian lore. So attached was he to this study, that during his fellowship of St. John's College, Cambridge, he voluntarily gave a Greek lecture every morning in his own room at four o'clock; and, what affords a still more striking picture of the learned enthusiasm of the times, it is recorded that this very early prelection was regularly attended by nearly all the fellows of his college!

Latin Literature appears to have been cultivated with greater purity and success in the prior than in the latter portion of Elizabeth's reign. It is scarcely necessary to mention the great names of *George Buchanan* and *Walter Haddon*, who divided the attention of the classical world, and drew from Elizabeth the following terse expression on their comparative merits:—*Buchananum omnibus antepono; Haddonum nemini postpono.*\*

Nor can we fail to recollect the truly admirable production of *Ascham*, the "Schole Master; or plaine and perfite Way of teaching Children, to understand, write, and speake, the *Latin Tongue*:" than which a more interesting and judicious treatise has not appeared upon the subject in any language.

Among the most eminent Latin philologers who witnessed the close of the sixteenth century, may be mentioned the name of *Edward Grant*, Master of Westminster-School, who was celebrated for his Latin poetry, and who published, in 1577, *Oratio de vita et obitu Rogeri Aschami, ac dictionis elegantia, cum adhortatione ad adolescentulos*. He died in 1601.

With Grant should be classed the master of the free-school of Taunton in Somersetshire, *John Bond*, who subsequently practised as a physician, and died in 1612. He published, in 1606, some valuable commentaries, in the Latin language, on the poems of Horace, and, in 1614, on the Six Satires of Persius.

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\* Lord Orford's Royal and Noble Authors apud Park, vol. i. p. 93.



Roman literature, however, in this country was under yet higher obligations to *John Rider*, than to either of the preceding philologists; this learned prelate being the compiler of the first dictionary in our language, in which the English is placed before the Latin. It is entitled *A Dictionary Engl. and Latin, and Latin and English.* Oxon. 1589. 4to. Rider was promoted to the See of Killaloe in 1612, and died in 1632.

In our observations on the state of the *English* language we have noticed the labours of *Ascham* and *Wilson* as pre-eminently conducive to its improvement; the first of these writers having published two excellent models for English composition, and the second having presented us with a valuable treatise on rhetoric. To these should be added the efforts of *Richard Mulcaster*, first master of the Merchant-Taylors School, who, in 1581, published his "Positions, wherein those primitive circumstances be examined which are necessarie for the training up of Children, either for skill in their Booke or Health in their Bodie;" a work which was followed, in the subsequent year, by "The first Part of the *Elementarie*, which entreateth chiefly of the right Writing of the English Tung."

The *Positions* and the *Elementarie* of Mulcaster, though inferior in literary merit to the Scholemaster of Ascham, contributed materially to the progress of English philology, as they contain many valuable and acute observations on our language.

It appears, from the assertion of *William Bullokar*, an able co-operator in the work of education, that he was the author of the *first* English Grammar. In 1586 he printed his "Bref grammar for English," which is likewise entitled in fol. 1. "W. Bullokar's abbreviation of his Grammar for English extracted out of his Grammar at larg for the spedi parcing of English spech, and the eazier coming to the knowledge of grammar for other langages;" and Warton adds, in his account of Bullokar's writings, that among Tanner's books was found "a copy of his *bref grammar* above mentioned, interpolated and corrected with the author's own hand, as it appears, for a new impression. In one of these manuscript insertions, he



calls this, "the first grammar for Englishe that ever waz, except my grammar at large." \*

It is not exactly ascertained in what year the Grammar of *Ben Jonson* was written, as it did not appear until after his death; but it may be safely affirmed that to this production of the once celebrated rival and contemporary of Shakspeare, the English language has been more indebted than to the labours certainly of any previous, and we may almost add, of any subsequent, grammarian, Lowth's and Murray's even not excepted.

The next branch of our present subject embraces the department of CRITICISM, which was cultivated in this period to a great extent, and we are sorry to add not seldom with uncommon bitterness and malignity. Numerous are the writers who complain of the very severe and sarcastic tone in which the critics of the age indulged; but one instance or two will be sufficient to prove both the frequency and asperity of the art. Robert Armin, in his Address *Ad Lectorem hic et ubique*, prefixed to *The Italian Taylor and his Boy*, says, speaking of his pen, "I wander with it now in a strange time of taxation, wherein every pen and inck-horne Boy will throw up his cap at the hornes of the Moone in censure, although his wit hang there, not returning unlesse monthly in the wane: such is our ticklish age, and the itching braine of abondance †;" and in the *Troia Britannica* of Thomas Heywood, the author, saluting his various readers under the titles of the Courteous, the Criticke, and the Scornefull, tells the latter, "I am not so unexperienced in the envy of this Age, but that I knowe I shall encounter most sharpe, and severe Censurers, such as continually carpe at other mens labours, and superficially perusing them, with a kind of negligence and skorne, quote them by the way, Thus: This is an error, that was too much streacht, this too slightly neglected, heere many things might have been added, there it might have been better followed:

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\* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 346, 347.

† The Italian Taylor and his Boy. By Robert Armin, Servant to the King's most excellent Majestie, 1609.



this superfluous, that ridiculous. These indeed knowing no other meanes to have themselves opinioned in the ranke of understanders, but by calumniating other mens industries." \*

If such proved the strain of general, we need not be surprised if controversial, criticism assumed a still more tremendous aspect. Between the Puritans, in the reign of Elizabeth, who carried on their warfare under the fictitious appellative of *Martin Mar-prelate*, and the members of the episcopal church, a torrent of libels broke forth, which inundated the country with a deluge of distorted ridicule and rancorous abuse. Nor were the quarrels of literary men conducted with less ferocity, though perhaps with more wit. The republic of letters was, indeed, infested for near twenty years, from the year 1580 to 1600, with a set of Town-wits, who, void of all moral principle or decent restraint, employed their pens in lashing to death, with indiscriminate rage, the objects of their envy or their spleen. Of this description were those noted characters, Christopher Marlow, Robert Greene, Thomas Decker, and Thomas Nash; men possessed of genius, learning, and unquestioned ability, as poets, satirists, and critics; but excessively debauched in their manners, intemperate in their passions, and heedless of what they inflicted. The treatment which Gabriel Harvey, the bosom-friend of Spenser and Sidney, received from the scurrilous criticism of Greene and Nash, was, though not altogether unprovoked, beyond all measure gross, cruel, and vindictive. The literature and the moral character of Harvey were highly respectable; but he was vain, credulous, affected, and pedantic; he published a collection of panegyrics on himself; he turned astrologer and almanack-maker, he was perfectly *Italianated* in his dress and manner, in his style he was pompously elaborate, and he boasted himself the inventor and introducer of

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\* *Troia Britannica; or Great Britaine's Troy.* A Poem divided into xvij sevrall Cantons, intermixed with many pleasant Poeticall Tales. Concluding with an Universall Chronicle from the Creation, untill these present Times. Written by Tho. Heywood. 1609.

English Hexameters.\* These foibles, together with the obscurity of his parentage, his father being a rope-maker at Saffron-Walden, in Essex, a circumstance of which he had the folly to be ashamed, furnished to his adversaries an inexhaustible fund of ridicule and wit; and had these legitimate ingredients been unmingled with personal invective and brutal sarcasm, Gabriel, who was no mean railer himself, had not been sinned against; but the malignity of Greene and Nash was unbounded; and Harvey, who was morbidly irritable and bled at every pore, catching a portion of their spirit, the controversy became so outrageously virulent, that the prelates of Canterbury and London, Whitgift and Bancroft, interfering, issued an order, "that all Nashe's books and Dr. Harveys bookes be taken wheresoever they may be found, and that none of the said bookes be ever printed hereafter;" an injunction which has rendered most of the pamphlets on this literary quarrel extremely scarce, particularly Harvey's "Four Letters And Certaine Sonnets. Especially touching Robert Greene and other Poets by him abused. Imprinted by John Wolfe 1592;" a very curious work, which we shall have occasion to quote hereafter; and Nash's "Have with you to Saffron-Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's hunt is up," 1596, which includes a humorous but unmerciful representation of Gabriel's life and character, the bitter satirist exulting in the idea that he had brought on his adversary, by the poignancy of his invectives, the effects of premature old age. "I

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\* One of his specimens of "our Englishe reformed Versifying," as he terms it, is entitled *Encomium Lauri*, and commences thus:—

"What might I call this Tree? A Laurell? O bonny Laurell:  
Needes to thy bowes will I bow this knee, and vayne my bonetto;"

lines which Nash, in his *Foure Letters confuted*, 1593, has most happily ridiculed, representing Harvey walking under the "ewe-tree at Trinitie Hall," and addressing it in similar terms, and making "verses of weather cocks on the top of steeples, as he did once of the weather cocke of Allhallows in Cambridge:—

"O thou weathercocke, that stands on the top of All-hallows,  
Come thy waies down, if thou dar'st for thy crowne, and take the wall of us!"

Vide Todd's Spenser, vol. i. p. xliii.



have brought him low," he exclaims, "and shrewly broken him; look on his head, and you shall find a gray haire for everie line I have writ against him; and you shall have all his beard white too by the time he hath read over this booke." \*

How great a nuisance this bevy of lampooning critics was considered, and to what a height their shameless effrontery was carried, may be learnt from a passage in a pamphlet by Dr. Lodge, a contemporary physician of great learning and good sense, who, though he terms Nash, and perhaps very justly, "the true English Aretine," has drawn a picture which applies to him as accurately as to any individual of the class; "a fellow," to adopt the words of an old play with respect to this very man, "that carried the deadly stocke in his pen, whose muze was armed with a jag tooth, and his pen possest with Hercules furies."† "You shall know him" (the envious critic), says Lodge, "by this; he is a foule lubber, his tongue tipt with lying, his heart steeled against charity; he walks, for the most part, in black, under colour of gravity, and *looks as pale as y<sup>e</sup> wizzard of the ghost which cried so miserably at y<sup>e</sup> theater, like an oister wife, Hamlet revenge*: he is full of infamy and slander, insomuch as if he ease not his stomach in detracting somewhat or some man before noontide, he fals into a fever that holds him while supper time; he is alwaies devising of epigrams or scoffes and grumbles, necromances continually, although nothing crosse him, he never laughs but at other men's harms, briefly in being a tyrant over men's fames; he is a very Titius (as Virgil saith) to his owne thoughtes.

Titique vultus inter  
Qui semper lacerat comestque mentem.

The mischief is, that by grave demeanour and newes bearing, he hath got some credite with the greater sort, and manie fowles there

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\* See a copious and interesting account of the controversy between Nash and Harvey, in D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*, vol. ii. p. 1. ad 49.

† *The Returne from Parnassus; or the Scourge of Simony*, publicly acted by the Students in St. John's College in Cambridge, 1606.—Vide *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i. p. 49.

bee, that because he can pen prettilee, hold it gossell whatever he writes or speakes, his custome is to preferre a foole to credite, to despight a wise man, and no poet lives by him that hath not a flout of him. Let him spie a man of wit in a taverne, he is a hare brained quareller. Let a scholler write, Tush (saith he) I like not these common fellowes; let him write well, he hath stolen it out of some note booke; let him translate, tut it is not of his owne; let him be named for preferment, he is insufficient because poore; no man shall rise in his world, except to feed his envy; no man can continue in his friendship who hateth all men." He then adds the following judicious advice, predicting what would be the consequence of neglecting to pursue it: — "Divine wits for many things as sufficient as all antiquity (I speake it not on slight surmise, but considerate judgment) to you belongs the death that doth nourish this poison; to you the paine that endure the reproofe. LILLY, the famous for facility in discourse; SPENCER, best read in ancient poetry; DANIEL, choice in word and invention; DRAITON, diligent and formall; TH. NASH, true English Aretine. All you unnamed professors, or friends of poetry (but by me inwardly honoured) knit your industries in private to unite your fames in publicke; let the strong stay up the weake, and the weake march under conduct of the strong; and all so imbattle yourselves, that hate of vertue may not imbase you. Bu if besotted with foolish vain glory, emulation and contempt, you fall to neglect one another, *Quod Deus omen avertat*, doubtless it will be as infamous a thing shortly to present any book whatsoever learned to any Mæcenas in England, as it is to be headsman in any free city in Germanie." \*

Turning, however, from this abuse of critical and satiric talent, let us direct our attention exclusively to those productions of the art which are distinguished as well by moderation and urbanity, as by learning and acumen.

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\* Wits Miserie And The Worlds Madnesse. Discovering the Devils incarnate of this Age. 1596.—Vide Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books, vol. ii. p.164,165.



It is worthy of remark that in *English* literature, during this era, nearly all the professed critical treatises, if we except those of Wilson and Ascham, were employed on the subject of poetry. We shall confine ourselves, therefore, to a chronological enumeration, accompanied by a few observations, of these interesting pieces. The first, in the order of time, is a production of *George Gascoigne* the poet, and was published at the close of the second edition of "The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire, Corrected, perfected, and augmented by the Authour, 1575. *Tam Marti, quam Mercurio*. Imprinted at London by H. Bynneman for Richard Smith." It is entitled, "Certayne notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English, written at the request of Master Edovardo Donati;" and was again printed in "The whole workes of George Gascoign Esquyre: newlye compyled into one volume," small 4to. b. l. 1587. This little tract is more didactic than critical; but contains several judicious directions, and some sensible remarks.

Ten years after, appeared a treatise on "Scottis Poesie," from the pen of King James the First, when only eighteen years of age. This learned monarch commenced his career of authorship with "The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine art of Poesie. Imprinted at Edinburgh, by Thomas Vautroullier, 1585, 4to. Cum privilegio Regali." The fifth article in this miscellany includes the criticism in question, under the title of "Ane schort Treatise, containing some reulis and cautelis to be observit and eschewit in Scottis poesie." This is a production highly curious, as well for its manner as matter; for, not content with mere precept, the royal critic has given us copious specimens of the several kinds of verse then in use. The eighth chapter of this short treatise is devoted to this purpose, detailing rules and examples, 1st, For *lang histories*. 2dly, For *heroic acts*. 3dly, For *heich and grave subjects*. 4thly, For *tragic matters*. 5thly, For *flyting or invectives*. 6thly, For *Sonnet verse*. 7thly, For *Matters of love*; and 8thly, For *Tenfoot verse*.

Under the fifth head is given as an *exemplar* of the *Rouncefalles*, or *Tumbling* verse, the lines formerly quoted from the *Flyting* of

*Montgomery*, as illustrative of a superstition peculiar to Allhallow-Eve; and under the seventh, on "love materis," is introduced as an example of "cuttit and broken verse, quhairof new formes are daylie inventit according to the Poetis pleasour," the following stanza, which has been rendered familiar to an English ear by the genius of Burns: —

"Quha wald have tyrde to heir that tone,  
 Quhilk birds corroborat ay abone,  
 Through schouting of the larkis!  
 They sprang sa heich into the skyes,  
 Quhill Cupide walknis with the cryis  
 Of Nature's chapell clerkis.  
 Then leaving all the heavins above,  
 He lichted on the eard;  
 Lo! how that lytill god of love  
 Before me then appeard.  
 So mylde-like  
 And child-like,  
 With bow thre quarters skant,  
 So moilie  
 And coylie  
 He lukit lyke a Sant."

It is observable that James, in assigning his "twa caussis" for composing this work, tells us that "albeit *sindrie hes written of it* (poesie) *in English*, quhilk is lykest to our language, zit we differ from thame in *sindrie reulis of poesie*, as ze will find be experience;" but who these *sundry writers* were, has not, with the exception of Gascoigne's "Notes of Instruction," been hitherto discovered. \*

It is barely possible that the royal critic may have included in his "sindrie," the next work which we have to record on the subject, the production of our immortal Spenser, and entitled "The English

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\* For a further and more minute account of James's "Essayes," I refer the reader to Pinkerton's *Ancient Scottish Poems*, vol. i. p. cxix.; to Park's *Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. i. p. 120; to *Censura Literaria*, vol. ii. p. 364; and to Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, vol. i. p. 230.



Poet," a work which we lament should have been suffered to perish in manuscript. Its existence was first intimated to the public in 1579, by E. K., in his argument to the tenth Aeglogue of the *Shepherd's Calender*, with a promise, which unfortunately proved faithless, of committing it to the press. Poetry, observes this commentator, is "no art, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct not to be gotten by labour and learning, but adorned with both; and poured into the witte by a certaine Enthusiasmos and celestial inspiration, as the Author hereof elsewhere at large discourseth in his booke called *The English Poet*, which booke being lately come to my handes, I minde also by God's grace, upon further advisement, to publish." \* That the taste and erudition of Spenser had rendered this critical essay highly interesting, there is every reason to conclude, and though the only positive testimony to its composition rests on the single authority which we have quoted, it is extremely probable, from the manner in which its acquisition by the commentator is mentioned, that the MS. had circulated, and continued to circulate, among the friends and admirers of the poet, for some years.

Scarcely had the British Solomon published his juvenile criticisms, when a kindred work issued from the London press, under the title of "A Discourse of English Poetrie, together with the Author's Judgment touching the reformation of our English verse. By William Webbe, Graduate. Imprinted at London by John Charlewood. 4to, 1586." Black letter.

The chief purport of this pamphlet, now so rare that only three copies are known to exist †, is to propose, what the author terms, a "perfect platform, or prosodia of versifying, in imitation of the Greeks and Latins," a scheme which, though supported by Sidney, Dyer, Spenser, and Harvey, happily miscarried. "The hexameter verse," says Nash, with great good sense, in his controversy with Harvey, "I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house, (so is

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\* Spenser's Works apud Todd, vol. i. p. 161. See also, vol. i. p. vii. and p. clviii.

† One in the King's Library, one in the late Mr. Malone's collection, and one purchased by the Marquis of Blandford, at the Roxburgh Sale, for 64*l*!



many an English beggar,) yet this clyme of ours hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language, like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one syllable and downe the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins." \*

Webbe's "Discourse," however, is valuable on account of the characters which he has drawn of the English poets, from Chaucer to his own time. He notices, also, "Gaskoynes Instructions for versifying;" and, after declaring the Shepherd's Calender inferior neither to Theocritus nor Virgil, he expresses an ardent wish that the other works of Spenser might get abroad, and especially his "English Poet, which his friend E. K. did once promise to publish." The tract concludes with the author's assertion, that his "onely ende" in compiling it was "not as an exquisite censure concerning the matter," but "that it might be an occasion to have the same thoroughly, and with greater discretion taken in hande, and laboured by some other of greater abilitie, of whom I know there be manie among the famous poets in London, who both for learning and leysure may handle the argument far more pythelie." †

In 1588, *Abraham Fraunce*, another encourager and writer of English Hexameter and Pentameter verses, published in octavo, a critical treatise, a mixture of prose and verse, under the quaint title of "The Arcadian Rhetoricke, or the Precepts of Rhetoricke made plain by example, Greeke, Latyne, Englishe, Italyan, and Spanishe." This rare volume is in the library of Mr. Malone, and is valuable, observes Warton, for its English examples. ‡

In the same year which produced Fraunce's work, appeared the *Touch-Stone of Wittes*, written by *Edward Hake*, and printed at

\* Vide Nash's "Four Letters Confuted," and his "Have with ye to Saffron-Walden," and D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*, vol. i.

† Vide Oldys's *British Librarian*, p. 86, and Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, vol. i. p. 234.

‡ Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 406.



London by Edmund Botifaunt. This little tract is employed in sketching the features of the chief poets of the day; but differs not materially from *Webbe's Discourse of English Poetrie*, from which, indeed, it is principally compiled. Hake describes himself (in another of his productions called "*A Touchstone for this time present*," ) as an "attorney of the Common Pleas;" mentions his having been educated under John Hopkins, whom he terms a learned and exquisite teacher, and when criticising the *Mirroure of Magistrates* in his *Touchstone of Wittes*, speaks of its augmentor, John Higgins, as his particular friend. \*

But by far the most valuable work which was published in the province of criticism, during the life-time of Shakspeare, was written by *George Puttenham*, and entitled "The Arte of English Poesie, Contrived into three Bookes: The first of Poets and Poesie, the second of Proportion, the third of Ornament. At London Printed by Richard Field, dwelling in the black-Friers neere Ludgate. 1589."

This book, which seems to have been composed considerably anterior to its publication, was printed anonymously, and has been ascribed to Spenser and Sidney.† Bolton, whose *Hypocritica* was written in the reign of James I., though not printed until 1722, mentions Puttenham, however, as the reputed author; and a reference to Bolton's manuscript, preserved in the archives at Oxford, enabled Anthony Wood to announce this fact to the public. "There is," says he, "a book in being called *The Art of English Poesie*, not written by Sydney, as some have thought, but rather by one *Puttenham*, sometime a Gentleman Pensioner to Qu. Elizab." ‡

An elegant reprint of this old critic has been lately (1811) edited by Mr. Haslewood, in which, with indefatigable industry and

\* Warton's History, vol. iii. p. 275.

† "Mr. Wanley, in his Catalogue of the Harley Library, says he had been told, that Edm. Spenser was the author of that book, which came out anonymous." Vide Todd's Spenser, vol. i. p. clviii.

‡ Wood's Athenæ Oxon. edit. 1691. vol. i. col. 184.

research, he has collected all that could throw light on the personal and literary history of his author. His opinion of the critical acumen of Puttenham, though favourable, is not too highly coloured. "Puttenham," he remarks, "was a candid but sententious critic. What his observations want in argument, is made up for by the soundness of his judgment; and his conclusions, notwithstanding their brevity, are just and pertinent. He did not hastily scan his author, to indulge in an untimely sneer, and his opinions were adopted by contemporary writers, and have not been dissented from by the moderns." \*

Of the same tenour are the sentiments of Mr. Gilchrist, who opens his analysis of the *Arte of English Poesie*, with asserting that it "is on many accounts one of the most curious and entertaining, and, intrinsically, one of the most valuable books of the age of Elizabeth;" infinitely superior, he adds, as an elementary treatise on the arts, to the volumes of Wilson and Webbe, "as being formed on a more comprehensive scale, and illustrated by examples; while the copious intermixture of contemporary anecdote, tradition, manners, opinions, and the numerous specimens of coeval poetry, no where else preserved, contribute to form a volume of infinite amusement, curiosity, and value." †

To various parts of this interesting treatise, we shall have occasion frequently to refer, when discussing the subjects of miscellaneous poetry and metropolitan manners. It is indeed a store-house of poetical erudition.

The next work which, in the order of publication, falls under our notice, is SIR JOHN HARRINGTON'S *Apologie of Poetry*, prefixed in 1591 to his *Version of the Orlando Furioso of Ariosto*. It is a production of some merit, displaying both judgment and ingenuity; but is most remarkable for the earliest notice of Puttenham's *Arte of Poesie*, and for affording a striking proof of the obscurity in which

\* Haslewood's Reprint, 1811. p. xi.

† *Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 339.



that critic had enveloped himself with regard to its parentage ; for though two years had elapsed since its publication, it appears that neither the Queen, her courtiers, nor the literary world, had the slightest idea of its origin, and Sir John speaks of the author under the appellation of "*Ignoto*." "Neither," says he, "do I suppose it to be greatly behoovefull for this purpose, to trouble you with the curious definitions of a poet and poesie, and with the subtill distinctions of their sundrie kinds ; nor to dispute how high and supernatural the name of a Maker is, so christened in English by that *unknowne Godfather*, that this last yeare save one, viz. 1589, set forth a booke called the Art of English Poetrie : and least of all do I purpose to bestow any long time to argue, whether Plato, Zenophon, and Erasmus, writing fictions and dialogues in prose, may justly be called poets, or whether Lucan writing a story in verse be an historiographer, or whether Master Faire translating Virgil, Master Golding translating Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and my selfe in this worke that you see, be any more than versifiers, as the same *Ignoto* termeth all translators."\*

Poetry, soon after the birth of this Apology, had to boast of a champion of still greater prowess, in the person of SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, whose *Defence of Poesie* was first made public in 1595. It had, however, been previously circulated in manuscript for some years ; thus Sir John Harrington refers to it in his Apology 1591, and there is reason to believe, that it was written so early as 1581 or 1582. This delightful piece of criticism exhibits the taste and erudition of Sir Philip in a striking light ; the style is remarkable for amenity and simplicity ; the laws of the Drama and Epopœa are laid down with singular judgment and precision, and the cause of poetry is strenuously and successfully supported against the calumny and abuse of the puritanical scowlers, one of whom had the effrontery to dedicate to him his collection of scurrility, in the very title-page of which he

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\* Haslewood's Puttenham, p. x.



classes poets with pipers and jesters, and terms them the "caterpillars of the commonwealth." \*

A very ingenious "*Comparative Discourse of our English Poets, with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets*," was published by FRANCIS MERES, in 1598, under the title of *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury*.† Meres is certainly much indebted to the thirty-first chapter of the first book of Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*; but he has considerably extended the catalogue of poets, and it should be added, that his comparisons are drawn with no small portion of skill and felicity, and that his criticisms are, for the most part, just and tersely expressed.

Another attempt was made, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to introduce the Roman measures into English verse, in a duodecimo entitled, "Observations in the Art of English Poesie, by THOMAS CAMPION, wherein it is demonstratively proved, and by example confirmed, that the English toong will receive eight severall kinds of numbers, proper to itselfe, which are all in this book set forth, and were never before this time by any man attempted." London; printed by Richard Field, for Andrew Wise. 1602.

The object of this tract, which is dedicated to Lord Buckhurst, whom he terms, "the noblest judge of poesie," was not only to recommend the adoption of classical metres, but to abolish, if possible, the use of rhyme. "For this end," says he in his preface, "have I studied to induce a true forme of versefying into our language, for

\* "The Schole of Abuse; containing a pleasant invective against poets, pipers, players, jesters, &c. and such like caterpillars of the commonwealth, by Ste. Gossen, Stud. Oxon. dedicated to M. Philip Sidney, Esquier, 1579."

z "*Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury. Being the second part of Wits Common Wealth. By Francis Meres, Maister of Artes of both Universities. Vivitur ingenio, cætera mortis erunt. At London printed by P. Short, for Cuthbert Burbie, and are to be solde at his shop at the Royall Exchange. 1598.*" Small 8vo. leaves 174. We are under many obligations to Mr. Haslewood for reprinting the whole of the "*Comparative Discourse*" in the ninth volume of the *Censura Literaria*, as it must necessarily be to us a subject of frequent reference.



the vulgar and unartificial custome of riming hath, I know, deterred many excellent wits from the exercise of English Poesy."

In consequence of this determination, he has enforced his "Observations" by examples on the classic model, without rhyme; and among them, at p. 12. is a specimen of what he calls *Lincientiate Iambicks*, which is, in fact, our present blank verse.

This systematic attack upon rhyme speedily called forth a consummate master of the art in its defence; for in 1603 appeared, "A Defence of Ryme, against a pamphlet intituled, Observations in the Art of Poesie, wherein is demonstratively proved that ryme is the fittest harmonie of wordes that comports with our language." By Samuel Daniel.

It need scarcely be said that the elegant and correct poet has obtained a complete victory over his opponent, whom he censures, not so much for attempting the introduction of new measures, as for his abuse of rhyme; he might have shown his skill, he justly and eloquently observes, "without doing wrong to the honour of the dead, wrong to the fame of the living, and wrong to England, in seeking to lay reproach upon her native ornaments, and to turn the fair stream and full course of her accents, into the shallow current of a loose uncertainty, clean out of the way of her known delight. — Therefore here stand I forth," he adds in a subsequent paragraph, "only to make good the place we have thus taken up, and to defend the sacred monuments erected therein, which contain the honour of the dead, the fame of the living, the glory of peace, and the best power of our speech, and wherein so many honourable spirits have sacrificed to memory their dearest passions, showing by what divine influence they have been moved, and under what stars they lived." \*

Great modesty and good sense distinguish this pamphlet, in which the author candidly allows that rhyme has been sometimes too lavishly used and where blank verse might have been substituted with

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\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iii. p. 558, 559.

better effect, and he concludes his "Defence" with some excellent remarks on affectation in the choice and collocation of words, a vice from which he was more free than any of his contemporaries, simplicity and purity, in fact, being the leading features of his style.

The last critic of the era to which we are limited, is EDWARD BOLTON, whose "*Hypercritica*; Or a Rule of Judgment for writing or reading our Historys," a small collection of tracts or essays, "occasioned," says Warton, "by a passage in Sir Henry Saville's Epistle prefixed to his edition of our old Latin historians, 1596,"\* was supposed by Wood, in a note on the MS. preserved in the Ashmolean Museum, to have been written about 1610. But that this date is too early is evident from the work itself; for in the fourth essay, which is entitled "Prime Gardens for gathering English: according to the true gage or standard of the tongue about fifteen or sixteen years ago," King James's poetry is spoken of in the following manner:—"I dare not presume to speak of his Majesty's exercises in this heroick kind, because I see them all left out in that which Montague lord bishop of Winchester hath given us of his royal writings."† Now Bishop Montague's edition of James's Works was not published until 1616.

The principal writers in prose and poetry, anterior to 1600, are noticed in this fourth division of the *Hypercritica*, and the judgment passed upon them is, in general, correct and satisfactory, and does credit to the "sensible old English critic," as Warton emphatically terms him.‡

It is remarkable that the *Hypercritica* should have been suffered to continue in its manuscript state until 1722, at which period it was printed by Anthony Hall at the end of Trivet's "*Annalium Continuatio*." Oxford, 8vo.

Bolton, whom Ritson calls "a profound scholar and eminent critic§," was certainly a man of considerable learning, and occupied

\* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 278.

† *Hypercritica*. Adresse iv. sect. 3. p. 237.

‡ Warton's History, vol. iii. p. 275.

§ *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 135.



no small space in the public eye as an historian, philologist, and antiquary.

To this enumeration it may be necessary to add some notice of that industrious race of critics, termed *Commentators*; a species which, for the last half century, has been employed as laboriously on old English, as formerly were the German *Literati* on ancient classical, literature. Of this mode of illustration, which has lately thrown so much light on the manners and learning of our poet's age, two early and very ingenious specimens may be mentioned under the reign of Elizabeth and James. The first is the Commentary of E. K. on the Shepherds Calender of Spenser, in 1579; and the second, the learned Notes of Selden on the first eighteen Songs of the Polyolbion of Drayton, 1612; both productions of great merit, but especially the last, which exhibits a large portion of acumen and research, united to an equal share of discrimination and judgment.

Such are the chief critics on English literature who flourished during the life-time of Shakspeare. That some of them contributed very materially towards the improvement of polite literature, and especially of poetry, by stimulating the genius and guiding the taste of their contemporaries, must be readily granted, and more particularly may these benefits be attributed to the labours of *Webbe*, *Puttenham*, *Sidney*, and *Meres*. How far the manuscripts of *Spenser* and *Bolton*, at the commencement and termination of our critical era, assisted to enlighten the public mind, cannot now be ascertained; but as the circulation of works in this state is generally very confined, we cannot suppose, even admitting the industry and admiration of their favoured readers to have been strongly excited, that their effect could have been either widely or permanently felt.

It would be a subject of still greater curiosity, could we determine, with any approach towards precision, in what degree Shakspeare was indebted, for his progress in English literature, to the authors whom we have just enumerated, under the kindred branches of *philology* and *criticism*.

Of his assiduity as a reader of English books, whether original or translated, his works afford the most positive and abundant proofs ; and that he was peculiarly attentive to the philology of his native language is to be learnt from the same source. We have already noticed his satirical allusion to Florio and Lilly in the character of Holofernes, and a similar stroke on the innovating pedantry of the times, will be found in his *Much Ado about Nothing*, which was probably directed against another equally bold attempt to alter the whole system of orthography. The experiment was made by Bullokar, of whose Brief Grammar a slight mention has been given, in a book entitled an *Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech*, 1580 ; in which the author proposes not only an entire change in the established mode of spelling, but a total revolution also in the practice of printing. To level a sarcasm at the head of this daring innovator may have been the aim of the poet, where he represents Benedict complaining of Claudio, that “ *he was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man, and a soldier ; and now he is turned ORTHOGRAPHER ; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes.*” \*

In a former part of this work we have mentioned some of the books to which our great poet must have had recourse in the progress even of his limited education in the country ; and on his settlement in London, we cannot, with any probability, conceive, that a mind so active, comprehensive, and acute, would sit down content with its juvenile acquisitions, and hesitate to inspect those treatises on philology and criticism which had acquired the popular approbation, and were adapted to the years of manhood. Not only, indeed, did he peruse with avidity the *Arte of Rhetoricke* of Wilson, and the *Schoolmaster* of Ascham, but we are convinced, from a thorough study of his writings, that so extensive was his range of reading, that not a translation from the *Greek*, the *Latin*, the *Italian*, *Spanish*, or *French*

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 62, 63. Act ii. sc. 3.



appeared, but what was soon afterwards to be found in the hands of Shakspeare. His dramas, in fact, even without the aid of his indefatigable commentators, assure us, in almost every page, that, if not erudite from the possession of many languages, he was truly and substantially learned in every other sense; in the vast accumulation of materials drawn through the medium of translation, from the most distant and varied sources.

That he had not only read, but availed himself professionally of Wilson's Rhetoric, will be evident, we think, from a passage quoted by Mr. Chalmers, from this critic, in support of a similar opinion. Wilson has mentioned Timon of Athens in such a manner as *might* lead Shakspeare to select this misanthrope for dramatic exhibition; but the very character and language of *Dogberry* seem to be anticipated in the following sketch:—"Another good fellow of the countrey, being an officer and mayor of a toune, and desirous to speak like a fine learned man, having just occasion to rebuke a runnegate fellowe, said after this wise, in a greate heate:—Thou *yngraine* and *vacation* knave, if I take thee any more within the *circumcision* of my *dampnation*; I will so *corrupt* thee, that all other *vacation* knaves shall take *ilsample* by thee."\*

We cannot, however, coalesce with Mr. Chalmers, in considering the character of Holofernes as founded on the Scholemaster of Ascham, and that in drawing the colloquial excellence ascribed to the pedagogue by Sir Nathaniel, the poet had in his *minds-eye* the conversation at Lord Burleigh's table, so strikingly recorded by Ascham in his preface. We have not the smallest doubt but that our author had read, and with much pleasure and profit, the invaluable treatise of that accomplished scholar; but the general folly and pedantry of Holofernes are such, notwithstanding the eulogium of his clerical companion, as to preclude all idea that the character could have

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\* Wilson's Art of Rhetoric, p. 167, and Chalmers's Apology, p. 160.

been sketched from such a model; — it is, in fact, a broad caricature of some well known pedant of the day, and we must agree with the commentators in fixing upon *Florio* as the most probable prototype.

It will readily be granted, that, if Shakspeare were the assiduous reader which we have supposed him to be, and no judge, indeed, of his works can doubt it, he must have perused with peculiar interest the critical treatises on poets and poetry which were published during his march to fame. It will be considered, therefore, scarcely as an assumption to conclude, that the works of *Webbe*, *Puttenham*, *Sidney*, and *Meres* were familiar to his mind; and though he must have written with too much haste, and with too much attention to the gratifications of the *million*, to carry their precepts, and especially the strictures of *Sidney*, into perfect execution, yet it is very reasonable to conceive that even his early works may have been rendered less imperfect by the perusal of *Webbe* and *Puttenham*; and that, as he advanced in his professional career, the improved mechanism of his dramas, and his greater attention to the unities, may have been in some degree derived from the keen invectives of *Sir Philip*.

That Shakspeare, in return, contributed, more than any other poet, to enrich and modulate his native language, is now freely admitted; but that he was held in similar estimation by his contemporaries, and even at an early period of his poetical progress, may be inferred from what *Markham* has said of the “poets of his age” in 1595, when Shakspeare had published some of his poems, and had produced his “*Romeo*,” and from what *Meres*, in 1598, more specifically applies to our author; the former observing, in the Dedication of his *Gentleman's Academie*, with reference to the Booke of *St. Albans*, originally published in 1486, that “our tong being not of such puritie then, as at this day the Poets of our age have raised it to: of whom, and in whose behalf I wil say thus much, that our Nation may only thinke herselfe beholding for the glory and exact compendiousnes of our longuage;” and the latter expressly terming our poet, from the superiority



of his diction and versification, “*mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakspeare.*” \*

Reverting to the subject of National Literature, we proceed to notice the progress which HISTORY, GENERAL, LOCAL AND PERSONAL, may be deemed to have made, during the era to which we are limited.

History appears in every country to have been late in acquiring its best and most legitimate form, and to have been usually preceded by annals or chronicles, which, aspiring to no unity in arrangement, and void of all political or philosophical deduction, were confined to a bare chronological detail of facts. Such was the state of this important branch of literature on the accession of Elizabeth; numerous chroniclers had flourished from Robert of Gloucester to Fabian and Hall, but with little to recommend them, except the minuteness of their register, and the occasional illustration of manners and customs; and more distinguishable for credulity and prolixity than for any other characteristics.

The chronicle of *Holinshed*, however, which appeared in 1577, and a second edition in 1587, merits a higher title. It is more full and complete than any of its predecessors, and less loaded with trifling matter. We are much indebted to Reginald Wolfe, the Queen’s printer, for stimulating the historian to the undertaking, who was assisted, in his laborious task, by several able coadjutors, and particularly by the Rev. *William Harrison*, whose *Description of England*, prefixed to the first volume, is the most interesting and valuable document, as a picture of the country, and of the costume, and mode of living of its inhabitants, which the sixteenth century has produced.

The example of *Holinshed* was followed, towards the close of our period, by *Stowe* and *Speed*, writers more succinct in their narrative, more correct in their style, and more philosophical in their matter.

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\* Meres’s *Palladis Tamia*, in *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 46.

The “History of Great Britain” by Speed, the second edition of which was printed under the author’s care in 1620, is, in every respect, a work of very great merit, whether we consider its authorities, or the mode in which it is written. It is in fact a production which may be read with great pleasure and profit at the present day, and makes a nearer approach, than any former chronicle, to the tone of legitimate history.

In the mean time, the more classical form of this branch of literature was making a rapid progress. Numerous attempts were published, partaking of a mixed character, neither assuming the dignity of history, nor descending to the minuteness of the chronicle; Newton’s *History of the Saracens* \* and Fulbeck’s *Account of the Roman Factions*, previous to the reign of Augustus †, may be mentioned as specimens; but the great historians of this period, who condescended to use their native tongue, were Raleigh, Hayward, Knolles, Bacon, and Daniel, writers who in this province still hold no inferior rank among the classics of their country. The “History of the World,” by Sir Walter, exhibits great strength of style, and much solidity of judgment; Hayward’s *Lives of the three Norman Kings*, and of Henry the IV. and Edward the VI., contain many curious facts to which sufficient attention has not yet been paid; his diction is neat and smooth, but he adopts too profusely the classical costume of framing speeches for his principal characters. Knolles’s “General History of the Turks” is an elaborate and useful work, and its language is clear, nervous, and often powerfully descriptive. Bacon’s *Henry the VIIth* betrays too much of the apologist for arbitrary power, but it is otherwise of great value; it is written from original, and now lost, materials, with vigour and philosophical acuteness. But these historians are excelled, in purity of style and perspicuity of narration, by Daniel, whose “History of England,” closing with the

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\* A notable history of the Saracens. Lond. 4to. 1575.

† An historical collection of the continued factions, tumults, and massacres of the Romans before the peaceable empire of Augustus Cæsar. Lond. 1600. 8vo. 1601. 4to.



reign of Edward the Third, is a production which reflects great credit on the age in which it was written.

We must not omit to mention, however, two historians, who, by rejecting their vernacular language, and adopting that of ancient Rome, acquired for a time a more extended celebrity in this department. Buchanan and Camden are, or should be, familiar to all lovers of history and topography. The "*Rerum Scoticarum Historia*" of the first of these historians, and the "*Annales Rerum Anglicanarum et Hibernicarum*" of the second, are productions in deserved estimation; the former for the classical purity and taste exhibited in its composition, the latter for its accuracy and impartiality.

Of that highly interesting and useful branch of History which is included under the title of Voyages and Travels, the era of which we are treating affords a most abundant harvest. The two great collectors, *Hakluyt* and *Purchas*, appear within its range, compilers, whose industry and research need fear no rivalry. *Hakluyt's* first collection was published in a small volume in 1582; was increased to a folio in 1589, and to three volumes of the same size in 1598, containing upwards of two hundred voyages. The still more ample work of *Purchas* was commenced in 1613, by the publication of the first volume folio, with the title of "*Purchas, his Pilgrimage, or Relations of the World, and the Religions observed in all Ages and Places discovered, from the Creation unto this present; in four parts.*" This elaborate undertaking was greatly augmented in subsequent editions, of which the fourth and best was published in 1626, in five volumes folio, the last four being entitled "*Hakluytus Posthumous, or Purchas, his Pilgrims; containing a history of the world, in sea-voyages, and land-travels, by Englishmen and others.*" *Purchas* professes to include, in this immense compilation, the substance of *above twelve hundred authors*; it contains also the maps of Mercator and Hondius, and numerous engravings.

These vast and valuable collections are an honour to the reigns of Elizabeth and James; and, notwithstanding the industry and research of the moderns, have not yet been superseded.

To the gigantic labours of these writers, which include almost every previous book on the subject of voyage or travel, may be added the publications of two or three contemporaries of singular or useful notoriety. In 1611, *Thomas Coryate* printed the most remarkable of his eccentric productions, under the quaint title of “*Crudities hastily gobbled up in five Months Travels, in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia, Helvetia, some Parts of High Germany, and the Netherlands.*” Lond. large 4to. Coryate was a man of consummate vanity, of some learning, but of no judgment. Inflamed with an inextinguishable desire of travelling, he walked over a great part of Europe and Asia, terminating his life, “in the midst of his Indian travail,” about the year 1617. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the style, and often the matter of his book, which is preceded by nearly sixty copies of what Fuller calls *mock-commending verses*. “*Prince Henry,*” says the same writer, “allowed him a pension, and kept him for his servant. *Sweet-meats* and *Coriat* made up the *last course* at all *Court-entertainments*. Indeed he was the courtier’s *anvil* to trie their witts upon, and sometimes this *anvil* returned the *hammers* as hard knocks as it received, his bluntnesse repaying their abusivenesse.” \*

A still greater pedestrian than even Coryate lived, at this time, in the person of *William Lithgow*, who published his “*Travels*” in 1614. His peregrinations were extended through Europe, Asia, and Africa, and he declares, at the close of his book, that in his three voyages “his painful feet have traced over (besides passages of seas and rivers) thirty-six thousand and odd miles, which draweth near to twice the circumference of the whole earth.” His sufferings through the tyranny of the Spanish governor of Malaga, who had tortured, robbed, and imprisoned him, excited so much pity and indignation, that, on his arrival in England, he was conveyed to Theobalds on a feather-bed, being unable to stand, that King James might be an eye-witness of his “martyred anatomy,” as he terms the

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\* Fuller’s *Worthies of England*, part iii. p. 31.



miserable condition to which his body had been reduced. Lithgow's "Travels" are entertaining, and not ill written, but they abound in the marvellous, and too often excite the smile of incredulity.

The "Itinerary, or Ten Yeares Travell through Germany, Italy, England," &c. a folio volume by *Fines Moryson*, is a production of a far different cast. Moryson is a sober-minded and veracious traveller, and that part of his book which relates to the manners and customs of England and Scotland is peculiarly useful and interesting. He was a native of Lincolnshire, and fellow of Peter-house, Cambridge. "He began his Travels," relates Fuller, "May the first, 1591, over a great part of Christendome, and no small share of Turkey, even to Jerusalem, and afterwards printed his observations in a *large book*, which, for the truth thereof, is in good reputation, for of so great a traveller, he had nothing of a traveller in him, as to stretch in his reports. At last he was *Secretary* to *Charles Blunt*, Deputy of Ireland, saw and wrote the conflicts with, and conquest of *Tyrone*, a discourse which deserveth credit, because the writer's *eye* guides his *pen*, and the privacy of his place acquainted him with many secret passages of importance. He dyed about the year of our Lord 1614." \*

In that department of history which may be termed *local*, including topography and antiquities, the latter half of the sixteenth century had many cultivators. "Persons of greatest eminence in this sort of learning under queen Elizabeth," remarks Nicolson, "were Humphrey Lhuyd, John Twyne, William Harrison, and William Camden." † Lhuyd possessed unrivalled celebrity in his day, for Camden calls him "a learned Briton, who, for knowledge in antiquities, was reputed to carry, after a sort, with him, all the credit and honour." He wrote a variety of tracts, among which is a fragment of a Commentary on Britain; a Description of the Island of Mona;

\* Fuller's Worthies, part iii. p. 167, 168.

† Bishop Nicolson's Historical Library, vol. i. p. 8.

a Description of the Coasts of Scotland ; a Chorography of England and Wales ; and a Translation of Caradoc's History of Wales, subsequently published by Powel, and again by Wynn. Lluyd practised physic at Denbigh in Wales, and died there about the year 1570. His friend *John Twyne*, the translator of his *Commentarioli Britannicæ*, under the title of *The Breviary of Britain*, Lond. 1573, has been extolled also, both by Lee and Nicolson for his knowledge of the history and antiquities of his country. He died in 1581, leaving behind him two books of Commentaries on British History \*, which reached the press in 1590, and various Collectanea relative to the antiquities of Britain.

We must here add to Bishop Nicolson's enumeration the name of *William Lambarde*, the learned author of *Archaionomia, sive de priscis Anglorum Legibus*, and of the *Perambulation of Kent*. This last production, which was printed in 1570, is the prolific parent of our county histories, works which have in our days very rapidly increased, and which exhibit the estimation in which they are held, by the high price annexed to their publication.

Of *Harrison's* "Historical Description of the Island of Britain" we have already taken due notice, and it would be superfluous, in this place, to do more than mention the *Britannia* of *Camden*. Proceeding therefore to the reign of James, we have to increase the catalogue with the names of *Stowe*, *Norden*, *Carew*, and *Burton*. The *Survey of London* by *Stowe*, is one of the most early, valuable, and interesting of our topographical pieces ; and on it has been founded the subsequent descriptions of *Hatton*, *Seymour*, *Maitland*, *Noorthouck*, *Pennant*, and *Malcolm*. *John Norden* is well known to the lovers of topography by his *Speculum Britannicæ*, which was meant to include the chorography of England, but unfortunately extends no farther than the counties of Middlesex and Hertfordshire. Norden

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\* De Rebus Albioniciis, Britannicis atque Anglicis Commentariorum, lib. duo. Lond. 1590. 8vo.



was the projector of those useful works familiarly termed *Guides*, having written a "Guide for English Travellers," and a "Surveyor's Guide," both works of singular merit. He died about the year 1625. *Richard Carew*, the author of the "Survey of Cornwall," first printed in 1602, and termed, by Fuller, "the pleasant and faithfull description of Cornwall," was educated at Christ-Church, Oxford, where, at the early age of fourteen, though of three years' standing in the University, "he was called out to dispute *extempore*, before the Earls of *Leicester* and *Warwick*, with the matchless Sir *Philip Sidney*."\* The Cornwall of Carew, though now superseded by the more elaborate history of Dr. Borlase, is a compilation of great merit, and makes a nearer approach than Lambarde's Kent to a perfect model for county topography. Carew died in 1620.

*William Burton*, the last writer whom we shall mention under this head, though contemporary with Shakspeare for more than forty years, was not an author until six years after the poet's death, when he published his "Description of Leicestershire," folio; a book which, independent of its own utility, had the merit of stimulating Sir William Dugdale to the composition of his admirable "History of Warwickshire." Burton's work was justly considered as carrying forward, on an improved scale, the plan of Lambarde and Carew; it is now, however, thrown into the shade by the most copious, and, in every respect, the most complete county history which this kingdom has hitherto produced, the "Leicestershire" of Mr. Nichols. Burton was the friend of Drayton, and brother to the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

The third branch of History, the *personal* or biographical, cannot boast of any very celebrated cultivator during the period to which we are confined. Many ephemeral sketches, it is true, were given of the naval and military commanders of the day, at a time when enter-

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\* Fuller's Worthies, part i. p. 205.

prise and adventure enjoyed the marked protection of government ; but no classical production in biography, properly so called, no enduring specimen of personal history seems to have issued from the press ; at least we recollect no example, worth notice, in a separate form, and of the general compilers in this province, we are reduced to mention the names of *Fox* and *Pits*. The “ Acts and Monuments of the Church,” by the first of these writers, commonly called “ Fox’s Book of Martyrs,” is a mixed composition ; but as consisting principally of personal detail and anecdote, more peculiarly belonging to the department of biography. The first edition of the “ Martyrology” was published in London in 1563, in one thick volume folio, and the fourth in 1583, four years before the death of the author, in two volumes folio. This popular work, which was augmented to three volumes folio in 1632, has undergone numerous editions, and perhaps no book in our language has been more universally read. “ It may regarded,” remarks Granger, “ as a vast Gothic building : in which some things are superfluous, some irregular, and others manifestly wrong : but which, altogether, infuse a kind of religious reverence ; and we stand amazed at the labour, if not at the skill, of the architect. This book was, by order of Queen Elizabeth, placed in the common halls of archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and heads of colleges ; and was long looked upon with a veneration next to the Scriptures themselves.” \*

John Pits, who died in 1616, was a writer, in not inelegant Latin, of the lives of the Roman Catholic authors of England. His work, which was published after his death, at Paris, in 1619, 4to. is usually known and quoted by the title of *De illustribus Angliæ scriptoribus*. He is a bold plagiarist from Bale, partial from religious bigotry, and often inaccurate with regard to facts and dates.

To this summary of historical literature it will be necessary to add a few remarks on the translations which were made, during the era

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\* Granger’s Biographical History of England, 2d edit. 1775. vol. i. p. 222.



in question, from the Greek and Roman historians, as these would necessarily have much influence on the public taste, and would throw open to Shakspeare, and to those of his contemporaries who could not readily appeal to the originals, many sources of imagery and fable. It appears then, that from the year 1550 to the year 1616, all the great historians of Greece and Rome, had been either wholly or in part, familiarized in our language. That the Grecian classics were translated with any large portion of fidelity and spirit, will not easily be admitted, when we find their sense frequently taken from Latin or French versions; but they still served to stimulate curiosity, and to excite emulation. The two first books of *Herodotus*, 4to. appeared in 1584; *Thucydides* from the French of Claude de Seyssel, by Thomas Nicolls, folio, in 1550; a great part of *Polybius*, by Christopher Watson, 8vo. in 1568; *Diodorus Siculus*, by Thomas Hocker, 4to. in 1569; *Appian*, 4to. in 1578; *Josephus*, by Thomas Lodge, folio, in 1602; *Ælian*, by Abraham Fleming, 4to. in 1576; *Herodian*, from the Latin version of Politianus, by Nycholas Smyth, 4to. in 1591; and *Plutarch's Lives*, from the French of Amyot, by Sir Thomas North, folio, in 1579.

The Roman writers were more generally naturalized, without the aid of an intermediate version. *Livy* and *Florus* were given to the world by Philemon Holland, folio, in 1600; *Tacitus*, by Sir Henry Saville and Richard Grenaway, 4to. and folio, in 1591 and 1598; *Sallust*, by Thomas Paynell, 4to., and by Thomas Heywood, folio, in 1557 and 1608; *Suetonius*, by Philemon Holland, folio, 1606; *Cæsar*, by Arthur Golding, 4to., 1565, and by Clement Edmundes, folio, 1600; *Justin*, by Arthur Golding, 4to., 1564, and by Holland, 1606; *Quintus Curtius*, by John Brande, 8vo., 1561; *Eutropius*, by Nic. Haward, 8vo., 1564, and *Marcellinus*, by P. Holland, folio, 1609.

Such are the chief authors, original and translated, which, in the province of History, general, local, and personal, added liberally to the mass of information and utility which was rapidly accumulating throughout the Shakspearean era.



That our great poet amply availed himself of these stores, more particularly in those dramas which are founded on domestic and foreign history, every attentive reader of his works must have adequate proof. Several, indeed, of the writers that we have enumerated, though exclusively belonging to our period, and throwing much light on the manners, customs, and literature of their age, came rather too late for the poet's purpose; but of those who published sufficiently early, he has made the best use. Traces of his footsteps may be discerned in many of the authors that we have mentioned, but his greatest inroads seem to have been made through the compilations of *Holinshed* and *Hakluyt*, and through the version of *Plutarch* by *North*. All that was necessary in the *minutiæ* of fact, was derivable from the labours of the faithful *Holinshed*; much illustration was to be acquired from the manners-painting pen of *Harrison*; a knowledge of the globe and its marvels, was attainable in the narratives of *Hakluyt*; and the character and costume of Greece and Rome were vividly delineated in the delightful, though translated, pages of *Plutarch*. From these sources, and from a few which existed previous to the commencement of the poet's age, such as the *Froissart* of *Lord Berners*, and the *Chronicle* of *Hall*, were drawn and coloured those exquisite pictures of manners, history, and individual character, which fix and enrapture attention throughout the dramatic annals of *Shakspeare*. Indeed, from whatever mine the poet procured his ore, he uniformly purified it into metal of the finest lustre, and it may truly be added, that on the study of the "Histories" of *Shakspeare*, a more intimate acquaintance with human nature may be founded, than on any other basis.

Whilst on the subject of *History*, we must deviate in a slight degree from our plan, which excludes the detail of science, to notice two works in *Natural History*, from which our bard has derived various touches of imagery and description; I mean the Roman and the Gothic *Pliny*, rendered familiar to our author by the labours of *Holland*, and *Batman*; the former having published his Translation of *Pliny's* immense collection in 1601, folio, and the latter his



Commentary upon Bartholome, under the title of "Batman uppon Bartholome his booke De proprietatibus rerum," in 1582, folio. "Shakspeare," says Mr. Douce, speaking of Batman's Bartholome, "was extremely well acquainted with this work;" an assertion which he has sufficiently established in the course of his "Illustrations."\* Few, indeed, were the popular books of his day, to which our author had not access, and from which he has not derived some slight fact or hint conducive to his purpose.

We now approach the last branch of our present subject, *Miscellaneous Literature*; a topic which, were we not restricted by various other demands, might occupy a volume; for in no era of our annals have miscellaneous writers been more abundant than during the reign of Elizabeth.

A set of men at this time infested the town, in a high degree dissipated in their manners, licentious in their morals, and vindictive in their resentments, yet possessing a large share of native and acquired talent. These adventurers, who hung loose upon society, appear to have seized upon the press for the purpose of indulging an unbounded love of ridicule and raillery, sometimes excited by the mere spirit of badinage and frolic, more frequently stimulated by malignity and revenge, and often goaded to the task by the pressure of deserved poverty. The fertility of these writers is astonishing; the public was absolutely deluged with their productions, which proved incidentally useful, however, in their day, by the exposure of folly, and are valuable, at this time, for the illustrations which they have thrown upon the most evanescent portion of our manners and customs.

Another description of miscellaneous authors, consisted of those who, attached to the discipline of the puritans, employed their pens

\* As Batman's Bartholome, continues Mr. Douce, "is likely hereafter to form an article in a Shakspearean Library, it may be worth adding that in a private diary written at the time the original price of the volume appears to have been eight shillings." — *Illustrations*, vol. i. p. 9.

I have lately seen a copy of Batman, marked, in a Sale Catalogue, at three guineas and a half!

in inveighing with great bitterness against the dress and amusements of the less rigid part of the community ; and a third, equally distant from the levity of the first, and the severity of the second, class, was occupied in calmly discussing the various topics which, morals, taste, and literature supplied.

As examples of the first species, no age can produce more extraordinary characters than *Nash*, *Decker*, and *Greene* ; men intimately acquainted with all the crimes, follies, and debaucheries of a town-life, indefatigable as writers, and possessing the advantages of learning and genius. *Thomas Nash*, whose character as a satirist and critic, we have already given in a quotation from Dr. Lodge, died about the year 1600, after a life spent in controversy and dissipation. He had humour, wit, and learning, but debased by a plentiful portion of scurrility and buffoonery ; he was born at Leostoffe in Suffolk, educated at Cambridge, where he resided as a Member of St. John's College, nearly seven years, and obtained great celebrity, as the confuter and silencer of the puritanical *Mar-prelates*, a service that merited the reputation which it procured him. He was the boon companion of *Robert Greene*, whose vices he shared, and with whom he acted as the unrelenting scourge of the Harveys.

This terror of his opponents, this Aretine of England, though most remarkable for his numerous prose pamphlets, was also a dramatic poet. His productions, as enumerated by Mr. Beloe, amount to five and twenty.\*

*Thomas Decker*, an author still more prolific, began his career as a dramatic poet about the year 1597, and as a prose writer in 1603. His plays, now lost, preserved, or written in conjunction with others, amount to twenty-eight ; but it is in his capacity as a miscellanist that we have here to notice him.

His tracts, of which thirty have been attributed to him, and near five and twenty may be considered as genuine, clearly prove him to

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\* Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, vol. i. p. 260—274.



have been an acute observer of the fleeting fashions of his age, and a participator in all its follies and vices. His "Gul's Horne Booke, or Fashions to please all sorts of Guls," first printed in 1609, exhibits a very curious, minute, and interesting picture of the manners and habits of the middle class of society, and on this account will be hereafter frequently referred to in these pages.\* That experience had tutored him in the knaveries of the metropolis, the titles of the following pamphlets will sufficiently evince. "THE BELMAN OF LONDON, bringing to Light the most notorious Villanies that are now practised in the Kingdome," 1608; one of the earliest books professing to disclose the slang of thieves and vagabonds; and remarks Warton, from a contemporary writer, the most witty, elegant, and eloquent display of the vices of London then extant.† "LANTHERN AND CANDLE LIGHT: Or, The Bell-Man's Second Night's Walke. In which he brings to light a Brood of more strange Villanies than ever were till this Yeare discovered" 4to. 1612. "Villanies discovered by Lanthorn and Candle Light, and the Helpe of a new Crier called O-per-se-O. Being an Addition to the Belman's second Night's Walke, with canting Songs never before printed." 4to. 1616. It will occasion no surprise, therefore, if we find this describer of the arts and language of thieving himself in a jail; he was, in fact, confined in the King's Bench prison from 1613 to 1616, if not longer. The most remarkable transaction of his life appears to have been his quarrel with Ben Jonson, who, no doubt sufficiently provoked, satirizes him in his *Poetaster*, 1601, under the character of *Crispinus*; a compliment which Decker amply repaid in his "Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the humorous Poet," 1602, where he lashes Ben without mercy, under the designation of Horace Junior. Jonson replied in an address to the Reader, introduced in the 4to. edition of his play, in place of the epilogue, and points to Decker, under the

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\* We are much obliged to Dr. Nott, for a most elegant reprint of this interesting tract; the accompanying notes are highly valuable and illustrative.

† Vide Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, Fragment of vol. iv. p. 28—64.



appellation of the *Untrusser*. Decker was an old man in 1631, for in his *Match me in London*, published in that year, he says: "I have been a priest in Apollo's Temple many years, my voice is decaying with my age;" he probably died in 1639, the previous year being the date of his latest production.

Of *Robert Greene*, the author of near fifty productions\*, the history is so highly monitory and interesting as to demand more than a cursory notice. It affords, indeed, one of the most melancholy proofs of learning, taste, and genius being totally inadequate, without a due control over the passions, to produce either happiness or respectability. This misguided man was born at Norwich, about the middle of the sixteenth century, of parents in genteel life and much esteemed. He was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, from whence, at an early period of his education, he was, unfortunately for his future peace of mind, induced to absent himself, on a tour through Italy and Spain. His companions were wild and dissolute, and, according to his own confession†, he ran headlong with them into every species of dissipation and vice.

On his return to England, he took his degree of Batchelor of Arts at St. John's, in 1578, and afterwards, removing to Clare-hall, his Master of Arts degree in that college, 1583. We learn, from one of his numerous tracts, that, immediately after this event, he visited the metropolis, where he led a life of unrestrained debauchery. Greene was one of those men who are perpetually sinning and perpetually repenting; he had a large share of wit, humour, fancy, generosity, and good-nature, but was totally deficient in that strength of mind which is necessary to resist temptation; he was conscious, too, of his great abilities, but at the same time deeply conscious of the waste of

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\* For a catalogue of these, as far as they have hitherto been discovered, we refer the reader to Mr. Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature*, vol. ii., and to *Censura Literaria*, vol. viii.

† In his pamphlet, entitled *The Repentance of Robert Greene*, he informs us, that "wags as lewd" as himself "drew him to march into Italy and Spaine," where he "saw and practised such villanie as is abhominable to declare."



talent which had been committed to his care. When we find, therefore, that he was intended for the church, and that he was actually presented to the vicarage of Tollesbury, in Essex, on the 19th of June, 1584\*, we may easily conceive how a man of his temperament and habits would feel and act; he resigned it, in fact, the following year, no doubt shocked at the disparity between his profession and his conduct; for we find, from his own relation, that a few years previous to this incident, he had felt extreme compunction on hearing a sermon “preached by a godly learned man,” in St. Andrew’s Church, Norwich. †

It was shortly after this period that he married; and, if any thing could have saved Greene from himself, this was the expedient; for the lady he had chosen was beautiful in her person, amiable and moral in her character, and we know, from the works of this unhappy man, that *his* heart *had* been the seat of the milder virtues, and that he possessed a strong relish for domestic life.

The result of the experiment must lacerate the feelings of all who hear it; for it exhibits, in a manner never surpassed, the best emotions of our nature withering before the touch of Dissipation. The picture is taken from a pamphlet of our author’s, entitled “Never Too Late,” printed in 1590, where his career is admirably and confessedly shadowed forth under the character of the *Palmer Francesco*. It would appear from this striking narrative, if the minutiae, as well as the outline of it, are applicable to Greene, that he married his wife contrary to the wishes of her father; their pecuniary distress was great, but prudence and affection enabled them to realize the following scene of domestic felicity:—“Hee and Isabel joyntly together taking themselves to a little cottage, began to be as Ciceronicall as they were amorous; with their hands thrift coveting to satisfy their hearts thirst, and to be as diligent in labours,

\* See Gilchrist’s Examination of the Charges of Ben Jonson’s enmity to Shakspeare, p. 22.

† Beloe’s Anecdotes of Literature, vol. ii. p. 180.

as they were affectionate in loves; so that the parish wherein they lived, so affected them for the course of their life, that they were counted the very mirrors of methode; for he being a scholer, and nurst up in the universities, resolved rather to live by his wit, than any way to be pinched with want, thinking this old sentence to be true, *the wishers and woulders were never good householders*; therefore he applied himselfe in teaching of a schoole, where by his industry, hee had not onely great favour, but gate wealthe to withstand fortune. Isabel, that shee might seeme no lesse profitable, then her husband carefull, fell to her needle, and with her worke sought to prevent the injurie of necessitie. Thus they laboured to maintain their loves, being as busie as bees, and as true as turtles, as desirous to satisfie the world with their desert, as to feede the humours of their own desires. Living thus in a league of united virtues, out of this mutuall concord of conformed perfection, they had a sonne answerable to their owne proportion, which did increase their amitie, so as the sight of their young infant was a double rati-fying of their affection. Fortune and love thus joyning in league, to make these parties to forget the stormes, that had nipped the blossom of their former yerres." \*

The poetry of Greene abounds still more than his prose with the most exquisite delineations of rural peace and content, and the following lines feelingly paint this short and only happy period of his life:—

" Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content,  
 The quiet minde is richer than a crowne:  
 Sweete are the nights in carelesse slumber spent,  
 The poor estate scornes Fortune's angry frowne:  
 Such sweete content, such mindes, such sleepe, such blis,  
 Beggars injoy, when princes oft doe mis.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest,  
 The cottage that affords no pride nor care,

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\* Censura Literaria, vol. viii. p. 11, 12.



The meane that grees with country musicke best,  
 The sweete consort of mirth and musick's fare,  
 Obscured life sets downe a type of blis,  
 A minde content both crowne and kingdome is." \*

Deeply is it to be lamented, and with a sense, too, of humiliation for the frailty of human nature, that, with such inducements to a moral and rational life, with sufficient to support existence comfortably, for he had some property of his own, and his wife's dowry had been paid †, and with a child whom he loved, and with a wife whom he confesses was endowed with all that could endear and dignify her sex, he could suffer his passions so far to subdue his reason, as to throw these essentials towards happiness away ! In the year 1586 he abandoned this amiable woman and her son, to revel in all the vicious indulgences of the metropolis. The causes of this iniquitous desertion may be traced in his works ; from these we learn that, in the first place, she had endeavoured, and perhaps too importunately for such an irritable character, to reform his evil propensities ‡, and secondly that on a visit to London on business, he had been fascinated by the allurements of a courtesan §, and on this woman, whose name was Ball, and on her infamous relations, for her brother was afterwards hanged ||, he squandered both his own property and that of his wife.

It is almost without a parallel that during the remainder of Greene's life, including only six years, he was continually groaning with anguish and repentance, and continually plunging into fresh guilt ; that in his various tracts he was confessing his sins with the

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\* From Greene's Farewell to Follie. Vide Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. vi. p. 7.

† We learn these circumstances—his having squandered his paternal inheritance and his marriage portion—from his two tracts, *Never Too Late*, and *Repentance*, where all the prominent events of his life are detailed.

‡ Oldys says, that " he left his wife, for her good advice, in the year 1586." Berkenhout's *Biographia Literaria*, p. 390. note *d*.

§ See *Censura Literaria*, vol. viii. p. 13.

|| Berkenhout, p. 390. note *d*.

deepest contrition, passionately apostrophizing his injured wife, imploring her forgiveness in the most pathetic terms, and describing, in language the most touching and impressive, the virtue of her whom he had so basely abandoned.

He tells us, under the beautifully drawn character of Isabel, by whom he represents his wife, that upon her being told, by one of his friends, of his intended residence in London, and by another, of the attachment which had fixed him there, she would not at first credit the tale; but, when convinced, she hid her face, and inwardly smothered her sorrows, yet grieving at his follies, though unwilling to hear him censured by others, and at length endeavouring to solace her affliction by repeating to her cittern some applicable verses from the Italian of Ariosto. He then adds, that she subsequently hinted her knowledge of the amour to him in a letter, saying "the onely comfort that I have in thine absence is the child, who lies on his mother's knee, and smiles as wantonly as his father when he was a wooer. But, when the boy sayes, 'Mam where is my dad, when wil he come home;' then the calm of my content turneth to a present storm of piercing sorrow, that I am forced sometime to say, 'unkinde Francesco that forgets his Isabell. I hope Francesco it is thine affaires, not my faults, that procure this long delay.'" \*

The following pathetic song seems to have been suggested to Greene by the scene just described, and is a further proof of the singular disparity subsisting between his conduct and his feelings: —

" BY A MOTHER TO HER INFANT.

WEEPE not, my Wanton, smile upon my knee,  
When thou art old theres grieve enough for thee.  
Mothers wagge, prettie boy,  
Fathers sorrow, fathers joy;  
When thy father first did see  
Such a boy by him and me,

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\* "Never Too Late." See *Censura Literaria*, vol. viii. p. 15.



He was glad, I was woe,  
 Fortune changd made him so,  
 When he had left his prettie boy,  
 Last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weepe not, my Wanton, smile upon my knee,  
 When thou art old theres grieve enough for thee.

Streaming teares that never stint,  
 Like pearle drops from a flint,  
 Fell by course from his eies,  
 That one anothers place supplies.  
 Thus he grieved in every part,  
 Teares of bloud fell from his heart,  
 When he left his prettie boy,  
 Fathers sorrow, fathers joy.

Weep not, my Wanton, smile upon my knee,  
 When thou art old theres grieve enough for thee.

The wanton smilde, father wept,  
 Mother cried, babie leyt;  
 Now he crow'd more he cride,  
 Nature could not sorrow hide;  
 He must goe, he must kisse  
 Childe and mother, babie blisse,  
 For he left his prettie boy,  
 Fathers sorrow, fathers joy.

Weep not, my Wanton, smile upon my knee,  
 When thou art old theres grieve enough for thee." \*

In the mean time he pursued his career of debauchery in Town, whilst his forsaken wife retired into Lincolnshire. In July 1588, he was incorporated at Oxford, at which time, says Wood, he was "a pastoral sonnet maker, and author of several things which were pleasing to men and women of his time: they made much sport, and were valued among scholars." † In short, such had been the extravagance of Greene, that he was now compelled to write for his daily support, and his biographers, probably without any sufficient foundation, have chosen to consider him as the first of our poets who wrote

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\* Greene's Arcadia, 1587. Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 191.

† Berkenhout's Biographia Literaria, p. 389. note b.

for bread. It should be recorded, however, that his pen was employed not only for himself but for his wife; for Wood tells us, and it is a mitigating fact which has been strangely overlooked by every other writer, that he “*wrote to maintain his wife, and that high and loose course of living which poets generally follow.*” \* We have reason, indeed, to conclude, that the income which he derived from his literary labours was considerable, for his popularity as a writer of prose pamphlets, which, as Warton observes, may “claim the appellation of satires†,” was unrivalled. Ben Jonson alludes to them in his *Every Man out of his Humour*‡, and Sir Thomas Overbury, describing a chamber-maid, says “*she reads Greenes works over and over*; but is so carried away with the *Mirror of Knighthood*, she is many times resolv’d to run out of herself, and become a lady-errant.” §

It must be confessed that many of the prose tracts of Greene are licentious and indecent; but there are many also whose object is useful and whose moral is pure. They are written with great vivacity, several are remarkable for the most poignant raillery, all exhibit a glowing warmth of imagination, and many are interspersed with beautiful and highly polished specimens of his poetical powers. On those which are employed in exposing the machinations of his infamous associates, he seems to place a high value, justly considering their detection as an essential service done to his country; and he fervently thanks his God for enabling him so successfully to lay open the “most horrible Coosenages of the common Conny-Catchers, Cooseners and Crosse Biters,” names which in those days designated the perpetrators of every species of deception and knavery. ||

\* Wood’s *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. col. 136.

† *History of English Poetry*, Fragment of vol. iv. p. 81.

‡ *Act ii. sc. 3.*

§ *Vide New and choice Characters of severall Authors, together with that exquisite and unmatched poeme, The Wife; written by Syr Thonias Overburie. Lond. 1615. p.*

|| His “trifling pamphlets of Love,” as he himself terms them, (see *Repentance of Robert Greene*,) we shall not notice; but there are two, under the titles of “*Penelope’s Webb*,” and “*Ciceronis Amor*,” which deserve mention, as exhibiting many excellent precepts and examples for the youth of both sexes.



But the most curious and interesting of his numerous pieces, are those which relate to his own character, conduct, and repentance. The titles of these, as they best unfold the laudable views with which they were written, we shall give at length.

1. *Greene's Mourning Garment*, given him by Repentance at the Funerals of Love, which he presents for a Favour to all young Gentlemen that wishe to weane themselves from wanton Desires. Both pleasant and profitable. By R. Greene, Utriusque Academiae in Artibus Magister. Sero sed serio. Lond. 1590.

2. *Greene's Never Too Late*. Sent to all youthful Gentlemen, decyphering in a true English Historie those particular vanities, that with their frosty vapours nip the Blossomes of every Braine from attaining to his intended perfection. As pleasant as profitable, being a right Pumice Stone, apt to race out Idlenesse with delight and Folly with admonition. By Robert Greene, In Artibus Magister. Lond. 1590.

3. *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*. Bought with a million of Repentance, describing the Folly of Youth, the Falshood of make-shift Flatteries, the Miserie of the Negligent, and Mishaps of deceyving Courtezans. Published at his dying Request, and newly corrected and of many errors purged. Felicem fuisse infaustum. Lond. 1592.

4. *Greene's Farewell to Follie*. Sent to Courtiers and Scholers, as a President to warne them from the vaine Delights that drawe Youth on to Repentance. Sero sed serio. By Robert Greene.

5. *The Repentance of Robert Greene*, Maister of Artes. Wherein, by himselfe, is laid open his loose Life, with the Manner of his Death. Lond. 1592.

6. *Greene's Vision*. Written at the instant of his death, conteyning a penitent Passion for the folly of his Pen. Sero sed serio. By Robert Greene.

In these publications the author has endeavoured to make all the reparation in his power, by exposing his own weakness and folly, by detailing the melancholy effects of his dissipation, and by painting in the most impressive terms the contrition which he so bitterly felt.

In what exquisite poetry he could deplore his vicious habits, and by what admirable precepts he could direct the conduct of others, will be learnt from two extracts taken from his "Never Too Late," in the first of which the Penitent Palmer, the intended symbol of himself, repeats the following ode :

" Whilome in the Winter's rage,  
A Palmer old and full of age,  
Sate and thought upon his youth,  
With eyes, teares, and hart's ruth,  
Beeing all with cares yblent,  
When he thought on yeeres mispent,  
When his follies came to minde,  
How fond love had made him blinde,  
And wrapt him in a felde of woes,  
Shadowed with pleasures shoes,  
Then he sighed, and sayd, alas !  
Man is sinne, and flesh is grasse.  
I thought my mistres hairs were gold,  
And in her locks my harte I folde;  
Her amber tresses were the sight  
That wrapped me in vaine delight:  
Her ivorie front, her pretie chin,  
Were stales that drew me on to sin:  
Her starry lookes, her christall eyes,  
Brighter than the sunnes arise:  
Sparkling pleasing flames of fire,  
Yoakt my thoughts and my desire,  
That I gan cry ere I blin,  
Oh her eyes are paths to sin:  
Her face was faire, her breath was sweet,  
All her lookes for love was meete:  
But love is folly this I know,  
And beauty fadeth like to snow.  
Oh why should man delight in pride,  
Whose blossome like a dew doth glide:  
When these supposes taught my thought,  
That world was vaine, and beautie nought,  
I gan to sigh, and say, alas !  
Man is sinne, and flesh is grasse." \*

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\* Vide Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature, vol. vi. p. 9.



The second extract, entitled *The Farewell of a friend*, is supposed to be addressed to Francesco the Palmer, "by one of his companions ;" such an one, indeed, as might have saved him from ruin, had he sought for the original in real life.

" Let God's worship be thy morning's worke, and his wisdom the direction of thy dayes labour.

" Rise not without thanks, nor sleepe not without repentance.

" Choose but a few friends, and try those ; for the flatterer speaks fairest.

" If thy wife be wise, make her thy secretary ; else locke thy thoughts in thy heart, for women are seldome silent.

" If she be faire, be not jealous ; for suspition cures not womens follies.

" If she be wise, wrong her not ; for if thou lovest others she will loath thee.

" Let thy children's nurture be their richest portion : for wisdom is more precious than wealth.

" Be not proude amongst thy poore neighbours ; for a poore mans hate is perillous.

" Nor too familiar with great men ; for presumption winnes disdaine." \*

The virtues of Greene were, it is to be apprehended, confined to his books, they were theoretical rather than practical ; for, however sincere might be his repentance at the moment, or determined his resolution to reform, the impression seems to have been altogether transient ; he continued to indulge, with few interruptions, his vicious course, until a death, too accordant with the dissipated tissue of his life, closed the melancholy scene. He died, says Wood, about 1592, of a surfeit taken by eating pickled herrings and drinking Rhenish wine.† It appears that his friend Nash was of the party.

\* Never Too Late, part ii. See *Censura Literaria*, vol. viii. p. 135, 136.

† Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.* vol. i. p. 137.

Of the debauchery, poverty, and misery of Greene, Gabriel Harvey, with whom he had carried on a bitter personal controversy, has left us a highly-coloured description. If the last scene of his life be not exaggerated by this inveterate opponent, it presents us with a picture of distress the most poignant and pathetic upon record.

"I once bemoned," relates Harvey, "the decayed and blasted estate of *M. Gascoigne*, who wanted not some commendable parts of conceit, and endeavour: but unhappy *M. Gascoigne*, how lordly happy, in comparison of most unhappy *M. Greene*? He never envyed me so much as I pitied him from my hart; especially when his hostesse *Isam*, with teares in her eies, and sighes from a deeper fountaine (for she loved him deerely) tould me of his lamentable begging of a penny pott of Malmesie;—and how he was faine poore soule, to borrow her husbandes shirte, whiles his owne was a washing: and how his dublet, and hose, and sworde were sold for three shillings: and beside the charges of his winding sheete, which was four shillings, and the charges of his buriall yesterday in the New-church yard neere Bedlam, which was six shillings and foure pence; how deeply hee was indebted to her poore husbnde: as appeered by hys owne bonde of tenne poundes: which the good woman kindly shewed me: and beseeched me to read the writing beneath; which was a letter to his abandoned wife, in the behalfe of his gentle host: not so short as persuasible in the beginning, and pittifull in the ending.

*Doll,*

*I charge thee by the love of our youth, and by my soules rest, that thou wilt see this man paide: for if hee and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streetes.*

ROBERT GREENE.\*

The pity which Harvey assumes upon this occasion may justly be considered as hypocritical; for the pamphlet whence the above

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\* Four Letters and Certaine Sonnets. Especially touching Robert Greene, and other Poets by him abused. Lond. 1592. Vide Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 201, 202.



extract has been taken, abounds in the most rancorous abuse and exaggerated description of the vices of Greene, and contains, among other invectives, a sonnet unparalleled, perhaps, for the keen severity of its irony, and for the dreadful solemnity of tone in which it is delivered. It is put into the mouth of *John Harvey*, the physician, who had been dead some years, but who had largely participated of the torrent of satire which Greene had poured upon his brothers, Gabriel and Richard. If it be the composition of Gabriel, and there is reason to suppose this to be the case, from the tract in which it appears, it must be deemed infinitely superior, in point of poetical merit, to any thing else which he has written.

JOHN HARVEY THE PHYSICIAN'S WELCOME TO ROBERT GREENE !

" COME, fellow *Greene*, come to thy gaping grave,  
 Bid Vanity and Foolery farewell,  
 That overlong hast plaid the mad-brained knave,  
 And overloud hast rung the bawdy bell.  
 Vermine to vermine must repair at last;  
 No fitter house for busie folke to dwell;  
 Thy conny-catching pageants are past,  
 Some other must those arrant stories tell :  
 These hungry wormes thinke long for their repast;  
 Come on ; I pardon thy offence to me ;  
 It was thy living ; be not so aghast !  
 A Fool and a Physitian may agree !  
 And for my brothers never vex thyself ;  
 They are not to disease a buried elfe." \*

We have entered thus fully into the character and writings of Greene, from the circumstance of his having been the most popular miscellaneous author of his day, from the striking talent and genius which his productions display, and from the moral lesson to be drawn from his conduct and his sufferings. It may be useful to remark here, that a well chosen selection from his pamphlets, now

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\* Vide D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*, vol. ii. p. 17, 18.

all extremely rare, would furnish one of the most elegant and interesting volumes in the language. \*

Of the next class of miscellaneous writers, those derived from that part of the community which adhered to the tenets and discipline of the Puritans, and who employed their pens chiefly in satirizing their less enthusiastic neighbours, it will be sufficient to notice two, who have attracted a more than common share of attention, as well for the rancour of their animadversion, as for their rooted antipathy to the stage. The first of these, *Stephen Gosson*, was educated at Christ Church, Oxford; on leaving the University, he went to London, where he commenced poet and dramatist, and, according to Wood, "for his admirable penning of pastorals, was ranked with Sir P. Sidney, Tho. Chaloner, Edm. Spencer, Abrah. Fraunce, and Rich. Bernfield." † His dramatic writings, which consist of a tragedy, founded on Cataline's conspiracy, a comedy, and a morality, were never printed. Of his devotion to the Muses, however, he soon after heartily repented, as of a most heinous sin; for, imbibing the sour severity of the Puritans, he left the metropolis, became tutor in a gentleman's family, in the country, and subsequently took orders, declaiming in a style so vehement against the amusements of his early days, as to acquire a great share of popular notoriety. The work by which he is best known is entitled "*The Schoole of Abuse*. Conteyning a pleasaunt Invective against Poets, Plaiers, Jesters, and such like Caterpillers, of a Comonwelth; setting up the Flagge of Defiance to their mischievous exercise, and overthrowing their Bulwarkes by prophane Writers, naturall Reason and common experience. A Discourse as pleasaunt for Gentlemen that favour learning, as profitable for all that wyll follow vertue. By Stephen Gosson, Stud.

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\* This article has been chiefly drawn up from documents afforded by *Wood*, *Berkenhout*, *Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature*, *D'Israeli*, and the *Censura Literaria*. The extracts selected from his pamphlets by Mr. Beloe, in the opening of his sixth volume, will enable the reader to form a pretty good estimate of the poetical genius of Greene.

† Wood's *Athenæ Oxon.* vol. i.



Oxon." London, 1597. This was speedily followed by another attack in a pamphlet termed, "*Playes confuted in five Actions, &c.* Proving that they are not to be suffred in a christian common weale, &c.\*;" a philippic which he dedicated to Sir Francis Walsingham, as he had done his *Schoole* to Sir Philip Sidney; both of whom considered the liberty which he had taken, rather in the light of an insult than a compliment.

The warfare of Gosson, however, was mildness itself, compared with that which *Philip Stubbes* carried on against the same host of poetical sinners. This puritanical zealot, whose work we have repeatedly quoted, commenced his attack upon the public in the year 1583, by publishing in small 8vo. the first edition of his "*Anatomie of Abuses:*" contayning a discoverie, or briefe summarie of such notable vices and imperfections as now rayne in many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde: but (especiallie) in a verie famous Ilande called Ailgna: &c." A second impression, which now lies before me, was printed in 1595, 4to. and both it and the octavo are among the scarcest of Elizabethan books. "Stubbes," remarks Mr. Dibdin, "did what he could, in his *Anatomy of Abuses*, to disturb every social and harmless amusement of the age. He was the forerunner of that snarling satirist, Prynne; but I ought not thus to cuff him, for fear of bringing upon me the united indignation of a host of black-letter critics and philologists. A *large and clean* copy of his sorrily printed work, is among the choicest treasures of a Shakspearean virtuoso." He subjoins, in a note, commencing in the true spirit of bibliomaniacism, that "Sir John Hawkins calls this 'a curious and very scarce book;' and so does my friend, Mr. Utterson; who revels in his morrocco-coated copy of it — '*Exemplar olim Farmerianum!*'" Then proceeding more soberly, he adds, "Let us be candid, and not sacrifice our better judgments to our book-passions. After all, Stubbes's work is a caricatured drawing. It has strong

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\* Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 288. note t.

passages, and a few original thoughts; and is, moreover, one of the very few works printed in days of yore, which have running titles to the subjects discussed in them. These may be recommendations with the bibliomaniac: but he should be informed that this volume contains a great deal of puritanical cant, and licentious language: that vices are magnified in it in order to be lashed, and virtues diminished that they might not be noticed. Stubbes equals Prynne in his anathemas against Plays and Interludes; and in his chapters upon 'Dress' and 'Dancing,' he rakes together every coarse and pungent phrase in order to describe 'these horrible sins' with due severity. He is sometimes so indecent, that, for the credit of the age, and of a virgin reign, we must hope that every virtuous dame threw the copy of his book, which came into her possession, behind the fire. This may reasonably account for its present rarity." \*

Of the tone in which Stubbes book is written no inaccurate judgment may be formed from the various passages which we have already quoted; but the following short extract will more fully develope, perhaps, the acrimony of his pen than any paragraph that has yet been brought forward. He is speaking of the neglect of Fox's Book of Martyrs, "whilst other toyes, fantasies and bableries," he adds, "wherof the world is ful, are suffered to be printed. Then prophane schedules, sacraligious libels, and hethnical pamphlets of toyes and bableries (the authors whereof may vendicate to themselves no smal commendations, at the hands of the devil for inventing the same) corrupt men's mindes, pervert good wits, allure to baudrie, induce to whordome, suppress virtue and erect vice: which thing how should it be otherwise? for are they not invented and excogitat by Belzebub, written by Lucifer, licensed by Pluto, printed by Cerberus, and set a broche to sale by the infernal furies themselves to the poysoning of the whole world." †

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\* Dibdin's Bibliomania, p. 366, 367, and note.

† Anatomie of Abuses, sig. P, p. 7.



The works of Gosson and Stubbes are now chiefly valuable for the numerous illustrations which they incidentally give of the manners, customs, dress, and diversions, of their age, and especially for the light which they throw on the character and costume of the stage.

The progress of discussion has at length brought us to the *third* class of Miscellaneous Writers, who may be considered as possessing a more decorous and philosophic cast in composition than the authors who have just fallen beneath our notice. The individuals of this genus, too, are numerous, but we shall content ourselves with the mention of three, who were more than usually popular in their day, *Thomas Lodge, Abraham Fleming, and Gervase Markham*. Lodge was educated at Oxford, which he entered about 1573; he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine at Avignon, and practised as a physician in London, where he died in 1625. He was a dramatic poet as well a miscellaneous writer, and was considered by his contemporaries as a man of uncommon genius. He appears to have been, not only a scholar, but a man of the world, to have possessed no small share of wit and humour, and to have uniformly wielded his pen in support of morality and good order. Of his pieces no doubt many have perished; in his professional capacity, only one remains, a *Treatise on the Plague*; but the productions which acquired him most celebrity were written to expose the follies and vices of the times, and of these, about half a dozen are preserved. He is now best known by his "*Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse*. Discovering the Devils incarnate of this Age. Lond. 1596:" a tract which, although so extremely rare as to be in the possession of only one or two collectors, has been frequently quoted, owing to its containing some interesting notices of contemporary writers. The principal faults in the literary character of Lodge seem to have been a love of quaintness and affectation; the very titles of his pamphlets indicate the former; the alliteration in the one just transcribed is notorious, and another is termed "*Catharos. Diogenes in his Singularity*. Wherein is comprehended his merrie baighting fit for all men's benefits: Christened by him, A Nettle for Nice Noses, 1591." From a passage in *The*

*Returne from Pernassus* it is evident that he was thought to be deeply tainted with Euphuism, the literary folly of his time. The poet is speaking of Lodge and Watson, both, he says,

— “ subject to a crittick’s marginall.  
*Lodge* for his oare in every paper boate,  
 He that turnes over Galen every day,  
 To sit and simper Euphue’s legacy.” \*

*Abraham Fleming*, the corrector and enlarger of the second edition of Holinshed’s Chronicle in 1585, was prodigiously fertile, both as an original writer and a translator. In the latter capacity he gave versions of the Bucolics and Georgics of Virgil, both in rhyme of fourteen feet, 1575, and in the regular Alexandrine without rhyme, 1589; of Ælian’s Various History in 1576; of Select Epistles of Cicero, 1576, and in the same year, a *Panoplie of Epistles from Tully, Isocrates, Pliny, and others*; of the Greek Panegyric of Synesius, and of various Latin works of the fifteenth century. As an original miscellaneous writer, his pieces are still more numerous, and, for the most part, occupied by moral and religious subjects; for example, one is called *The Cundy of Comfort*, 1579; a second, *The Battel between the Virtues and Vices*, 1582, and a third *The Diamond of Devotion*, 1586. This last is so singularly quaint both in its title-page and divisions, so superior, indeed, in these departments, to the titles of his contemporary Lodge, and so indicative of the curious taste of the times in the methodical arrangement of literary matter, as to call for a further description. The complete title runs thus: “The Diamond of Devotion: Cut and squared into sixe severall pointes: namelie, 1. The Footepath of Felicitie. 2. A Guide to Godlines. 3. The Schoole of Skill. 4. A swarme of Bees. 5. A Plant of Pleasure. 6. A Grove of Graces. Full of manie fruitfull lessons availeable unto the leading of a godlie and reformed life.” The *Footepath of Felicitie* has ten divisions, concluding with a “looking glasse for the Christian

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\* Ancient British Drama, vol. i. p. 49.



reader;" the *Guide to Godlines*, is divided into three branches, and these branches into so many blossoms; the first branch containing four blossoms, the second thirteen, and the third ten; the *Schoole of Skill* is digested into three sententious sequences of the A. B. C.; the *Swarme of Bees* is distributed into ten honeycombs, including two hundred lessons; the *Plant of Pleasure* bears fourteen several flowers, in prose and verse; the *Grove of Graces* exhibits forty-two plants, or Graces, for dinner and supper, and the volume concludes with "a briefe praier."

From the specimens which we have seen of Fleming's composition, it would appear, that his affectation was principally confined to his title pages and divisions: for his prose is more easy, natural, and perspicuous, than most of his contemporaries. He was rector of Saint Pancras, Soper-lane, and died in 1607. \*

*Gervase Markham*, whom we have incidentally mentioned in various parts of this work, was the most indefatigable writer of his era. He was descended of an ancient family in Nottinghamshire, and commenced author about the year 1592. The period of his death is not ascertained; but he must have attained a good old age, for he fought for Charles the First, and obtained a Captain's commission in his army. His education had been very liberal, for he was esteemed a good classical scholar, and he was well versed in the French, Italian, and Spanish languages. As he was a younger son it is probable that his finances were very limited, and that he had recourse to his pen as an additional means of support. "He seems," remarks Sir Egerton Brydges, "to have become a general compiler for the booksellers, and his various works had as numerous impressions as those of Burn and Buchan in our days." † No subject, indeed, appears to have been rejected by Markham; *husbandry*, *huswifry*, *farriery*, *horsemanship*,

\* For catalogues of Fleming's Works, see Herbert's *Typographical Antiquities*; Warton's *Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 402 ad 405. Tanner's *Bibliotheca*, p. 287, 288, and *Censura Literaria*, No. viii. p. 313, et seq.

† *Censura Literaria*, vol. ii. p. 218.

and *military tactics, hunting, hawking, fowling, fishing, and archery, heraldry, poetry, romances, and the drama*: — all shared his attention and exercised his genius and industry. \* His popularity, in short, in

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\* As no complete catalogue of this ingenious author's productions is to be found in any one writer, I have thought it desirable to endeavour to form one, noticing only the first editions, when ascertained, and referring, for the full titles, to the works cited at the close of this note.

1. A Discourse of Horsemanshippe, 4to. 1593.
2. Thyrsys and Daphne, 1593.
3. The Gentleman's Academie, or Booke of St. Albans, 4to. 1595.
4. The poem of poems, or Sions muse, containyng the divine song of king Salomon, divided into eight eclogues, 8vo. 1595.
5. The most honourable tragedie of Sir Richard Grenvill knight, a heroick poem, in eight-line stanzas, 8vo. 1595.
6. Devoreux. Vertues tears for the losse of the most christian king Henry, third of that name, king of Fraunce: and the untimely death of the most noble and heroicall gentleman, Walter Devoreux, &c., 4to. 1597.
7. Ariosto's Rogero and Rodomantho, &c. paraphrastically translated. 1598.
8. The Teares of the beloved, or the Lamentation of Saint John, &c. 4to. 1600.
9. Cavelarice, or the English Horseman, 4to. 1607.
10. England's Arcadia, alluding his beginning from Sir Philip Sydney's ending, 4to. 1607.
11. Ariosto's Satyres, 4to. 1608.
12. The Famous Whore, or Noble Courtezan, 4to. 1609.
13. Cure of all diseases, incident to Horses, 4to. 1610.
14. The English Husbandman in two parts, 1613.
15. The Art of Husbandry, first translated from the Latin of Cour Heresbachiso, by Barnaby Googe, 4to. 1614.
16. Country Contentments; or the Husbandman's Recreations, 4to. 1615.
17. The English Huswife, 4to. 1615.
18. Cheap and Good Husbandry, 4to. 1616.
19. Liebault's Le Maison Rustique, or the Country Farm, folio. 1616.
20. The English Horseman, 4to. 1617.
- (8. How To Chuse, Ride, Traine, And Diet Both Hunting Horses And Running Horses, 1599.)
22. The Inrichment of the Weald of Kent, 4to.
23. Markham's Farewel to Husbandry, 4to. 1620.
24. The Art of Fowling, 8vo. 1621.
25. Herod and Antipater, a Tragedy, 4to. 1622.
26. The Whole art of Husbandry, contained in Four Bookes, 4to. 1631.
27. The Art of Archerie, 8vo. 1634.



all these various branches was unrivalled ; and such was his reputation as a cattle doctor, that the booksellers, aware of the value of his works of this kind in circulation, got him to sign a paper in 1617, in which he bound himself not to publish any thing further on the diseases of " horse, ox, cow, sheepe, swine, goates, &c." His books on agriculture were not superseded until the middle of the eighteenth century, and the fifteenth impression of his *Cheap and Good Husbandry*, which was originally published in 1616, is now before us, dated 1695. Nor were his works on rural amusements less relished ; for his *Country Contentments*, the first edition of which appeared in 1615, had reached the eleventh in 1675. The same good fortune attended him even as a poet, for in *England's Parnassus*, 1600, he is quoted thirty-four times, forming the largest number of extracts taken from any minor bard in the book. He appears to have been an enthusiast in all that relates to field-sports, and his works, now becoming scarce, are, in many respects, curious and interesting, and display great versatility of talent. By far the greater part of them, as is evident from their dates, was written before the year 1620, though many were subsequently corrected and enlarged.

Having thus given a sketch of three great classes of miscellaneous writers, it will be necessary to add some notice of a few circumstances which more peculiarly distinguished this branch of literature during the life-time of our poet.

28. *The Faithful Farrier*, 8vo. 1635.

29. *The Soldiers Exercise*, 3d edit. 1648.

30. *The Way to Get Wealth*, 4to. 1638.

31. *The English Farrier*, 4to. 1649.

32. *Epitome concerning the Diseases of Beasts and Poultry*, 8vo.

34. *His Masterpiece, concerning the curing of Cattle*, 4to. an edition 1662.

(10. *Marie Magdalen's Lamentations*, 4to. 1601.)

Numerous editions of many of these works, with alterations in the title-pages, were published to the year 1700. See *Censura Literaria*, vol. ii. p. 217—225. *Ritson's Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 273, 274. Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature*, vol. ii. p. 244, et seq. and vol. ii. p. 339. *Bridges's Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 278—285. *Biographia Dramatica*. *British Bibliographer*, No. iv. p. 380, 381. Warton's *Hist. of Engl. Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 485.



It is to the reign of Elizabeth, that we have to ascribe the origin of genuine printed *Newspapers*, a mode of publication which has now become absolutely essential to the wants of civilised life. The epoch of the Spanish invasion forms that of this interesting innovation, for, previous to the daring attempt of Spain, all public news had been circulated in manuscript, and it was left to the sagacity of Elizabeth and the legislative prudence of Burleigh to discover, how highly useful, in this agitated crisis, would be a more rapid circulation of events, through the medium of the press. Accordingly, in April 1588, when the formidable Armada approached the shores of old England, appeared the first number of *The English Mercury*. That it was published very frequently, is evident from the circumstance that No. 50, the earliest number now preserved, and which is in the British Museum, Sloane MSS., No. 4106, is dated the 23d of July 1588. It resembles the London Gazette of the present day, with respect to the nature of its articles, one of which presents us with this curious information:—"Yesterday the Scotch Ambassador had a private audience of Her Majesty, and delivered a letter from the King his master, containing the most cordial assurances of adhering to Her Majesty's interests, and to those of the protestant religion; and the young King said to Her Majesty's minister at his court, that all the favour he expected from the Spaniards was, the courtesy of Polyphemus to Ulysses, that he should be devoured the last."\*

So rapid was the progress of newspapers after this memorable introduction, that towards the close of the reign of James, Ben Jonson, in his *Staple of News*, alludes to them, as fashionable among all ranks of people, and as sought after with the utmost avidity, one consequence of which was, that the greater part of what was communicated was fabricated on the spot. To this grievance the poet refers in an address to his readers, where, speaking of spurious news, he calls it "news

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\* See Chalmers's *Life of Ruddiman*, 8vo. p. 106. Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 34, and Andrew's *History of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 145, 156.



made like the Times news, (a weekly cheat to draw money,) and could not be fitter reprehended, than in raising this ridiculous office of the Staple, wherein the age may see her own folly, or *hunger and thirst after published pamphlets of news, set out every Saturday*, but made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them."\*

Another branch of miscellaneous literature which may be said to have originated at this period, was that employed in the writing of *Characters*; a species of composition which, if well executed, necessarily throws much light on the manners and customs of its age.

A claim to the first legitimate collection of this kind, may be allotted, on the authority of Fuller, to Sir Thomas Overbury; "he was," says that entertaining compiler, "the first writer of *Characters* of our nation, so far as I have observed."† With the exception of two small tracts, descriptive of the characters of rogues and knaves ‡, this assertion appears to be correct. Few works have been more popular than Overbury's volume; it was printed several times, according to Wood, before the author's death in 1613; but the earliest edition now usually met with, is dated 1614, and is, with great probability, supposed to be the fifth impression, for the sixth, which is not uncommon, was published the subsequent year. Various alterations took place in the title-page of this miscellany, but that of 1614 is as follows: — "A Wife now the Widdow of Sir Thomas Overbury. Being a most exquisite and singular Poem of the Choice of a Wife. Whereunto are added many witty Characters, and conceited Newes, written by himselfe and other learned Gentlemen his friends.

Dignum laude virum musa vetat mori,  
Cælo musa beat. Hor. Car. lib. iii.

London, Printed for Lawrence Lisle, and are to bee sold at

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\* Act ii., at the close.

† Fuller's *Worthies*, p. 359.

‡ "The Fraternitie of Uacabondes," 1565, and "A Caveat for common Cursitors vulgarly called Uagabones, set forth by Thomas Herman, Esq." 1567.

his shop in Paule's Church-yard, at the signe of the Tiger's head. 1614. 4to." \* The characters in this edition amount to twenty-two, but were augmented in the eleventh, printed in 1622, to eighty. So extensive was the sale of this collection, that the sixteenth impression appeared in 1638.

Both the poem and the characters exhibit no small share of talent and discrimination. In *Overbury's Wife*, observes Mr. Neve, "the sentiments, maxims, and observations with which it abounds, are such as a considerable experience and a correct judgment on mankind alone could furnish. The topics of jealousy, and of the credit and behaviour of women, are treated with great truth, delicacy and perspicuity. The nice distinctions of moral character, and the pattern of female excellence here drawn, contrasted as they were with the heinous and flagrant enormities of the Countess of Essex, rendered this poem extremely popular, when its ingenious author was no more." † The prose characters, though rather too antithetical in their style, are drawn with a masterly hand, and are evidently the result of personal observation.

Numerous imitations of both were soon brought forward; in 1614 appeared "The Husband. A poeme expressed in a compleat man;" small 8vo.: and in 1616, "A Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overburie's Wife; now a matchlesse Widow:" small 8vo.; which were followed by many others. The prose characters established a still more durable precedent, for they continued to form a favourite mode of composition for better than a century. Of these the most immediate offspring were, "Satyrical Characters" by John Stephens, 8vo. 1615, and "The Good and the Badde, or Description of the Worthies and Unworthies of this Age. Where the Best may see

\* Three editions were probably published in 1614; for Mr. Capel, in his *Prolusions*, 8vo., notices one in 8vo., and one in 4to. stated in the title-page to be the fourth. Vide Bliss's edition, of the *Microcosmography*, p. 258, and *Censura Literaria*, vol. v. p. 363,

† *Cursory Remarks on Ancient English Poets*, 1789. p. 27, et seq.



their Graces, and the Worst discern their Basennesse," by Nicholas Breton, 4to. 1616. Perhaps the most valuable collection of characters, previous to the year 1700, is that published by Bishop Earle, in 1628, under the title of *Microcosmography*, and which may be considered as a pretty faithful delineation of many classes of characters as they existed during the close of the sixteenth, and commencement of the seventeenth, century. \*

One of the earliest attempts at miscellaneous *Essay-writing*, since become a most fashionable and popular species of literary composition, may likewise very justly be ascribed to a similar epoch. In 1601, Thomas Wright published in small octavo a collection of Essays, on various subjects, which he entitled *The Passions of the Minde*. This volume, consisting of 336 pages independent of the preface, was re-issued from the press in 1604, enlarged by nearly as much more matter, and in a quarto form; and a third edition in the same size appeared in 1621.

The work is divided into six books, and, from the specimens which we have seen, is undoubtedly the production of a practised pen and a discerning mind. It is termed by Mr. Haslewood, "an amusing and instructive collection of philosophical essays, upon the customary pursuits of the mind;" and he adds, "though a relaxation of manners succeeded the gloomy history of the cowl, and the abolition of the dark cells of superstition; it was long before the moralist ventured to draw either example, or precept, from any other source than Scripture, and the writings of the fathers. Genius run riot in some instances from excess of liberty, but the calm, rational, and universal essayist was a character unknown. In the present work there are passages that possess no inconsiderable portion of ease, spirit, and freedom, diversified with character and anecdote that prove the author mingled with the world to advantage; and could

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\* For an accurate Catalogue of the various Writers of Characters to the year 1700, consult Bliss's edition of Earle's *Microcosmography*, 1811.



occasionally lighten the hereditary shackles that burthened the moral and philosophical writer." \*

It is, however, to the profound genius of *Lord Bacon* that we must attribute the *earliest legitimate* specimen of essay-writing in this country; for though his "Essays on Councils, Civil and Moral," were not completed until 1612, the first part of them was printed in 1597; and in the intended dedication to Prince Henry of this second edition, he assigns his reason for adopting the term *essay*. "To write just treatises," he observes, "requires leisure in the writer, and leisure in the reader, and therefore are not so fit, neither in your Highness's princely affairs, nor in regard of my continual service, which is the cause that hath made me chuse to write certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously, which I have called Essays. The word is late, but the thing is ancient; for Seneca's Epistles to Lucilius, if you mark them well, are but essays, that is, dispersed meditations, though conveyed in the form of epistles." † This invaluable work, in a moral and prudential light, perhaps the most useful which any English author has left to posterity, has been the fruitful parent of a more extensive series of similar productions, collectively or periodically published, than any other country can exhibit.

The age of Shakspeare was fertile, also, in what may be termed *Parlour-window Miscellanies*; books whose aim was to attract the attention of the idle, the dissipated, and the gossiping, by intermingling with the admonitions of the sage, a more than usual share of wit, narrative, and anecdote. Two of these, as exemplars of the whole class, it may be necessary to notice. In 1589, Leonard Wright published "*A Display of dutie, dect with sage sayings, pythie sentences, and proper similies: Pleasant to reade, delightfull to heare, and profitable to practise;*" a collection which Mr. Haslewood calls "an

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\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 168.

† Bacon's Works, folio edit. 1740, vol. iv. p. 586.



early and pleasing specimen" of this species of miscellaneous writing. It contains observations and friendly hints on all the principal circumstances and events of life; "certaine necessarie rules both pleasant and profitable for preventing of sicknesse, and preserving of health: prescribed by Dr. Dyet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman;" and concludes with "certaine pretty notes and pleasant conceits, delightfull to many, and hurtfull to none." The author closes "A friendly advertisement touching marriage," by enumerating the infelicities of the man who marries a shrew, where "hee shall finde compact in a little flesh, a great number of bones too hard to digest. — And therefore," adds he, "some do thinke wedlocke to be that same purgatorie, which learned divines have so long contended about, or a sharpe penance to bring sinnefull men to heaven. A merry fellow hearing a preacher say in his sermon, that whosoever would be saved, must take up and beare his cross, ran straight to his wife, and cast her upon his back. . . . .

"Finally, he that will live quiet in wedlocke, must be courteous in speech, cheareful in countenance, provident for his house, carefull to traine up his children in vertue, and patient in bearing the infirmities of his wife. Let all the keyes hang at her girdle, only the purse at his own. He must also be voide of jelosie, which is a vanity to thinke, and more folly to suspect. For eyther it needeth not, or booteth not, and to be jelious without a cause is the next way to have a cause.

"This is the only way, to make a woman dum :

To sit and smyle and laugh her out, and not a word, but mum." \*

In 1600, appeared the first edition of "*The Golden-grove, moralized in three books: A worke very necessary for all such, as would know how to governe themselves, their houses, or their countrey. Made by W. Vaughan, Master of Artes, and Graduate in the Civill Law.*"

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\* British Bibliographer, No. VI. p. 49. 51.

A second edition, "reviewed and enlarged by the Authour," was printed in 1608.

Each book of this work, which displays considerable knowledge both of literature and of mankind, is divided, after a ridiculous fashion of the time, into plants, and these again into chapters. The first book, on the Supreme Being, and on man, contains eleven plants, and eighty-four chapters; the second, on domestic and private duties, five plants, and thirty chapters; and the third, upon the commonwealth, nine plants and seventy-two chapters.

Great extent of reading, and much ingenuity in application, are discoverable in the *Golden Grove*, accompanied by many curious tales, and local anecdotes. It is one of the books, also, which has thrown light upon the manners and diversions of its age, and will hereafter be quoted on this account. Vaughan, though he professes himself attached to poetry from his earliest days, and has devoted a chapter to its praise, was too much of the puritan to tolerate the stage, against which he inveighs with more acrimony than discrimination. The passages which allude to our old English poets, we shall throw together, as a specimen of his style and composition.

" Jeffery Chaucer, the English poet, was in great account with King Richard the Second, who gave him in reward of his poems, the mannour of Newelme in Oxfordshire. — King Henry the eighth, her late Maiesties father, for a few psalms of David turned into English meeter by Sternhold, made him groome of his privie chamber, and rewarded him with many great giftes besides. Moreover, hee made Sir Thomas More Lord Chauncelour of this realme, whose poetickall workes are as yet in great regard. — Queene Elizabeth made Doctour Haddon, beyng a poet, Master of the Requests. — Neither is our owne age altogether to bee dispraysed. Sir Philip Sydney excelled all our English poets, in rareness of stile and matter. King James, our dread Sovereigne, that now raigneth, is a notable poet, and hath lately set out most learned poems, to the admiration of all his subjects.



“ Gladly I could go forward in this subject, which in my stripling yeeres pleased me beyond all others, were it not I delight to bee briefe: and that Sir Philip Sydney hath so sufficiently defended it in his Apology of Poetry; and if I should proceede further in the commendation thereof, whatsoever I write would be eclipsed with the glory of his golden eloquence. Wherefore, I stay myselfe in this place, earnestly beseeching all gentlemen, of what qualitie soever they bee, to advaunce poetrie, or at least to admire it, and not bee so hastie shamefully to abuse that, which they may honestly and lawfully obtayne.” \*

We shall conclude these observations on the miscellaneous literature of Shakspeare's time, by noticing one of the earliest of our *Facetiæ*, the production of an author who may be termed, in allusion to this *jeu d'esprit*, the *Rabelais* of England. Had the subject of this satire been less exceptionable in its nature, the popularity which it acquired for a season might have been permanent; but its grossness is such as not to admit of adequate atonement by any portion of wit, however poignant. It is entitled “*A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, called the Metamorphosis of Ajax. Written by Misacmos to his friend and cosin Philostilpnos.*” London, 1596; and is said to have originated from the author's invention of a water-closet for his house at Kelston. † The conceit, or pun upon the word Ajax, or a *jakes*, appears to have been a familiar joke of the time, and had been previously introduced by Shakspeare in his *Love's Labour's Lost*, when Costard tells Sir Nathaniel, the Curate, on his failure in the character of Alexander, “you will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this: your lion, that holds his poll-ax sitting on a close-stool, will be given to A-jax: he will be the ninth worthy.” ‡ A similar allusion is to be found in Camden and Ben Jonson.

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\* British Bibliographer, No. VIII. p. 272, 273.

† Nugæ Antiquæ, vol. i. p. xi. edit. 1804.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 187. Act v. sc. 2.

The *Metamorphosis*, for which Sir John published a witty apology, under the appellation of *An Anatomie of the Metamorphosed Ajax*, abounds with humour and sarcastic satire, and is valuable as an illustration of the domestic manners of the age. Either from its indecency, however, or its severity upon her courtiers, the facetious author incurred the displeasure of Elizabeth, and was banished for some time from her presence. It is probably to the latter cause that his exile is to be attributed; for in a letter addressed to the knight by his friend, Mr. Robert Markham, and dated 1598, he says:—“Since your departure from hence, you have been spoke of, and with no ill will, both by the nobles and the Queene herself. Your book is almoste forgiven, and I may say forgotten; but not for its lacke of wit or satyr. Those whome you feared moste are now bosoming themselves in the Queene’s grace; and tho’ her Highnesse signified displeasure in outwarde sorte, yet did she like the marrowe of your booke. Your great enemye, Sir James, did once mention the Star-Chamber, but your good esteeme in better mindes outdid his endeavours, and all is silente again. The Queen is minded to take you to her favour, but she sweareth that she believes you will make epigrams and write *misacmos* again on her and all the courte; she hath been heard to say, ‘that merry poet, her godson, must not come to Greenwich, till he hath grown sober, and leaveth the ladies sportes and frolicks.’ She did conceive much disquiet on being tolde you had aimed a shafte at Leicester.”\*

The genius of Harrington was destined to revive, with additional vigour, in the person of Swift, who, to an equal share of physical impurity, united a richer, and more fertile vein of coarse humour and caustic satire.

That Shakspeare was well acquainted with the various works which we have noticed in this class of literature, and probably with most of their authors, there is much reason to infer. We have already

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\* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. p. 239, 240.



found\* that he was justly offended with Robert Greene, for the notice which he was pleased to take of him in his *Groat's Worth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance*, and there can be no doubt that the philippics of Gosson and Stubbes, being pointedly directed against the stage, would excite his curiosity, and occasionally rouse his indignation. The very popular satires also of Nash and Decker must necessarily have attracted his notice, nor could a mind so excursive as his, have neglected to cull from the varied store which the numerous miscellanies, characters, and essays of the age presented to his view. It can be no difficult task to conceive the delight, and the mental profit, which a genius such as Shakspeare's, of which one characteristic is its fertility in aphoristic precept, must have derived from the study of Lord Bacon's Essays! The apothegmatic treasures of Shakspeare have been lately condensed into a single volume by the judgment and industry of Mr. Lofft, and it may be safely affirmed, that no uninspired works, either in our own or any other language, can be produced, however bulky or voluminous, which contain a richer mine of preceptive wisdom than may be found in these two books of the philosopher and the poet, the *Essays* of Bacon, and the *Aphorisms* of Shakspeare.

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\* Part II. chap. i.

## CHAPTER III.

VIEW OF ROMANTIC LITERATURE DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE — SHAKSPEARE'S ATTACHMENT TO AND USE OF ROMANCES, TALES, AND BALLADS.

THAT a considerable, and perhaps the greater, portion of Shakspeare's Library consisted of Romances and Tales, we have already mentioned as a conclusion fully warranted, from the extensive use which he has made of them in his dramatic works. What the precious tomes specifically were which covered his shelves, we have now no means of *positively* ascertaining; but it is evident that we shall make a near approximation to the truth, if we can bring forward the *library of a contemporary collector* of romantic literature, and at the same time *contemporary authority* for the romances then most in vogue.

Now it fortunately happens, that we have not only a few curious descriptions, by the most unexceptionable authors of the reigns of Elizabeth and James, of the popular reading of their day, but we possess also a catalogue of the collection of one of the most enthusiastic hoarders of the sixteenth century, in the various branches of romantic lore; a document which may be considered, in fact, as placing within our view, a kind of *fac simile* of this, the most copious, department of Shakspeare's book boudoir.

The interesting detail has been given us by Laneham, in his *Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Killingworth Castle, 1575*. The author is describing the Storial Show by a procession of the Coventry men, in celebration of Hock Tuesday, when he suddenly exclaims, — “ But aware, keep bak, make room noow, heer they cum.

“ And fyrst *Captain Cox*, an od man I promiz yoo; by profession a Mason, and that right skilfull; very cunning in fens, and hardy az



Gavin; for hiz ton-sword hangs at hiz tablz eend; great oversight hath he in matters of storie: For az for *King Arthurz* book, *Huon of Burdeaus*, the foour sons of *Aymon*, *Bevys of Hampton*, *The Squyre of lo degree*, *The Knight of Courtesy*, and the *Lady Faguell*, *Frederick of Gene*, *Syr Eglamoour*, *Syr Tryamoour*, *Syr Lamwell*, *Syr Isenbras*, *Syr Gawyn*, *Olyver of the Castl*, *Lucres* and *Curialus*, *Virgil's Life*, the *Castl of Ladiez*, the *Wido Edyth*, the *King* and the *Tanner*, *Frier Rous*, *Howleglas*, *Gargantua*, *Robinhood*, *Adam Bel*, *Clim of the Clough* and *William of Clondsley*, the *Churl* and the *Burd*, the *Seven Wise Masters*, the *Wife lapt in a Morels Skin*, the *Sak full of Nuez*, the *Seargeaunt* that became a *Fryar*, *Skogan*, *Collyn Clout*, the *Fryar* and the *Boy*, *Elynor Rummig*, and the *Nutbrooun Maid*, with many moe then I rehearz heere; I believe hee have them all at hiz fingers endz.

“ Then in Philosophy, both morall and naturall, I think hee be az naturally overseen; beside *Poetrie* and *Astronomie*, and oother hid *Sciencez*, az I may gesse by the omberty of his books; whearof part, az I remember, *The Shepherd's Kalender*, *The Ship of Foolz*, *Danielz Dreamz*, the *Booke of Fortune*, *Stans puer ad Mensam*, *The by way to the Spittl-house*, *Julian of Brainford's Testament*, the *Castle of Love*, the *Booget of Demaunds*, the *Hundred Mery Talez*, the *Book of Riddels*, the *Seaven Sororz of Wemen*, the *Prooud Wives Pater Noster*, the *Chapman of a Peneworth of Wit*: Beside hiz Auncient Playz, *Yooth* and *Charitee*, *Hiskorner*, *Nugizee*, *Impacient Poverty*, and herewith *Doctor Boords Breviary of Health*. What should I rehearz heer, what a bunch of Ballets and Songs, all auncient; as *Broom broom on Hill*, *So Wo iz me begon*, *troly lo*, *Over a Whinny Meg*, *Hey ding a ding*, *Bony lass upon a green*, *My hony on gave me a bek*, *By a bank as I lay*: and a hundred more he hath fair wrapt up in parchment, and bound with a whip cord. And az for Almanacks of Antiquitee (a point for Ephemeridees), I ween he can sheaw from *Jazper Laet* of *Antwarp* unto *Nostradam* of *Frauns*, and thens unto our *John Securiz* of *Salsbury*. To stay ye no longer heerin, I dare say hee hath az fair a Library for theez *Sciencez*, and az many



goodly monuments both in prose and poetry, and at after noonz can talk az much with out book, az ony inholder betwixt *Brainford* and *Bagshot*, what degree soever he be." \*

Of the library of this military bibliomaniac, who is represented as "marching on valiantly before, clean trust and gartered above the knee, all fresh in a velvet cap, flourishing with his *ton* sword," Mr. Dibdin has appreciated the value when he declares, that he should have preferred it to the extensive collection of the once celebrated magician, Dr. Dee. "How many," he observes, "of Dee's magical books he had exchanged for the pleasanter magic of *Old Ballads* and *Romances*, I will not take upon me to say: but that this said bibliomaniacal Captain had a library, which, even from Master Laneham's imperfect description of it, I should have preferred to the four thousand volumes of Dr. John Dee, is most unquestionable."

He then adds in a note, in reference to the "*Bunch of Ballads and Songs, all ancient!—fair wrapt up in parchment, and bound with a whip cord!*" "it is no wonder that Ritson, in the historical essay prefixed to his collection of *Scotish Songs*, should speak of some of these ballads with a zest, as if he would have sacrificed half his library to untie the said 'whip cord' packet. And equally joyous, I ween, would my friend Mr. R. H. Evans, of Pall-Mall, have been—during his editorial labors in publishing a new edition of his father's collection of Ballads—(an edition, by the bye, which gives us more of the genuine spirit of the COXEAN COLLECTION than any with which I am acquainted)—equally joyous would Mr. Evans have been, to have had the inspection of some of these 'bonny' songs. The late Duke of Roxburgh, of never-dying bibliomaniacal celebrity, would have parted with half the insignia of his order of the Garter, to have obtained *clean original copies* of these fascinating effusions!" †

Though the Romances and Ballads in Captain Cox's Library are truly termed "ancient," yet it appears, from unquestionable contem-

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\* Nichols's Progresses, vol. i. Laneham's Letter, p. 34—36.

† Dibdin's Bibliographical Romance, p. 349, 350, and note.



porary authority, that these romances, either in their original dress or somewhat modernised, were still sung to the harp, in Shakspeare's days, as well in the halls of the nobility and gentry, as in the streets and ale-houses, for the recreation of the multitude: thus Puttenham, in his "*Arte of English Poesie*," published in 1589, speaking of historical poetry adapted to the voice, says, "we our selves who compiled this treatise have written for pleasure a little brief *Romance* or *historicall ditty* in the English tong of the Isle of great *Britaine* in short and long meetres, and by breaches or divisions to be more commodiously song to the harpe in places of assembly, where the company shal be desirous to heare of old adventures and reliaunces of noble knights in times past, as are those of king *Arthur* and his knights of the round table, Sir *Bevys* of *Southampton*, *Guy* of *Warwicke* and others like;" and he afterwards notices the "blind harpers or such like *taverne minstrels* that give a fit of mirth for a groat, their matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the tale of Sir *Topas*, the reportes of *Bevis* of *Southampton*, *Guy* of *Warwicke*, *Adam Bell*, and *Chymme* of the *Clough* and such other old *Romances* or *historicall rimes*, made purposely for recreation of the comon people at *Christ-masse diners* and *bride ales*, and in *tavernes* and *ale-houses* and such other places of base resort." \*

Bishop Hall, likewise, in his *Satires* printed in 1598, alluding to the tales that lay

" In chimney-corners smok'd with winter fires,  
To read and rock asleep our drowsy sires,"

exclaims, —

" No man his threshold better knowes, than I  
Brute's first arrival, and first victory;  
St. George's sorrel, or his crosse of blood,  
Arthur's round board, or Caledonian wood,

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\* Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, reprint of 1811, p. 33. 69.

Or holy battles of bold Charlemaine,  
 What were his knights did Salem's siege maintaine:  
 How the mad rival of faire Angelice  
 Was physick'd from the new-found paradise ! \*

and even so late as Burton, who finished his interesting work just previous to our great poet's decease, we have sufficient testimony that the major part of our gentry was employed in the perusal of these seductive narratives: "If they read a book at any time," remarks this eccentric writer, "'tis an English Chronicle, *Sr. Huon of Bordeaux*, *Amadis de Gaul* &c.;" and subsequently, in depicting the inamoratoes of the day, he accuses them of "reading nothing but play books, idle poems, jests, *Amadis de Gaul*, the *Knight of the Sun*, the *Seven Champions*, *Palmerin de Oliva*, *Huon of Bordeaux*, &c." †

These contemporary authorities prove, to a certain extent, what were considered the most popular romances in the reigns of Elizabeth and James; but it will be satisfactory to enquire a little more minutely into this branch of literature.

The origin of the metrical Romance may be traced to the fostering influence of our early Norman monarchs, who cultivated with great ardour the French language; and it was from the courts of these sovereigns that the French themselves derived the first romances in their own tongue. ‡ The gratification resulting from the recital or chaunting of these metrical tales was then confined, and continued to be for some centuries, to the mansions of the great, owing to the vast expense of maintaining or rewarding the minstrels with whom, at that time, a knowledge of these splendid fictions exclusively rested. No sooner, however, was the art of printing discovered, than the wonders of romance were thrown open to the eager curiosity of the public, and the presses of Caxton and Winkin de Worde groaned

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\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. v. p. 283. col. 2.

† Anatomy of Melancholy, folio. 8th edit. p. 84. col. 2. p. 177. col. 2.

‡ See Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, vol. i. Introduction, p. 38.; and the Abbé de la Rue's Dissertations on the Anglo-Norman poets, *Archæologia*, vol. xii. and xiii.



under the production of prose versions from the romantic poesy of the Anglo-Norman bards.

So fascinating were the wild incidents and machinery of these volumes, and so rapid was their consequent circulation, that neither the varied learning nor the theological polemics of the succeeding age, availed to interrupt their progress; and it was not until towards the close of the seventeenth century, that the feats of the knight and the spells of the enchanter ceased to astonish and exhilarate the halls of our fathers.

In the whole course of this extensive career, from the era of the conquest to the age of Milton, a poet whose youth, as he himself tells us, was nourished "among those lofty fables and romances, which recount, in sublime cantos, the deeds of knighthood \*," perhaps no period can be mentioned in which a greater love of romantic fiction existed, than that which marks the reign of Elizabeth; and this, too, notwithstanding the improvement of taste, and the progress of classical learning; for though the national credulity had been chastened by the gradual efforts of reason and science, yet was the daring imagery of romance still the favourite resource of the bard and the novelist, who, skilfully blending its potent magic with the colder but now fashionable fictions of pagan antiquity, flung increasing splendour over the union, and gave that permanency of attraction which only the peculiar and unfettered genius of the Elizabethan era could bestow.

Confining ourselves at present, however, chiefly to the consideration of the *prose* romance, we may observe, that five distinct classes of it were prevalent in the age of Shakspeare, which we may designate by the appellations of *Anglo-Norman*, *Oriental*, *Italian*, *Spanish*, and *Pastoral*, Romance.

Under the first of these titles, the *Anglo-Norman*, we include all those productions which have been formed on the metrical romances

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\* See Toland's Life of Milton, p. 35.



of the feudal or Anglo-Norman period, and to which the terms *Gothic* or *Chivalric* have been commonly, though not exclusively, applied. These are blended not only with much classical fiction, but with a large portion of oriental fable, derived from our commerce with the East during the period of the Crusades, and are principally occupied either in relating the achievements of Arthur, Charlemagne, and the knights engaged in the holy wars, or in chivalarising, if we may use the word, the heroes of antiquity, or in expanding the wonders of oriental machinery.

The most popular prose romance of this class was undoubtedly *La Morte D'Arthur*, translated from various French romances by Sir Thomas Malory, and printed by Caxton in 1485, a work which includes in a condensed form the most celebrated achievements of the knights of the Round Table.\* This "noble and joyous book," as it is termed by its venerable printer, was the delight of our ancestors until the age of Charles the First; and in no period more decidedly so than in the reign of Elizabeth, when probably there were few lordly mansions without a copy of this seducing tome, either in the great hall or in the ladies bower. Such were its fascinations, indeed, as to excite the apprehensions, and call forth the indignant, and somewhat puritanical, strictures of Ascham and Meres; the former in his *Schoole master* 1571, when, reprobating the inordinate attachment to books of chivalry, instancing "as one for example, *Morte Arthur*, the whole pleasure of which booke," he says, "standeth in two specyall poyntes, in open mans slaughter and bolde bawdrie: in which booke, those be counted the noblest knights that doe kill most men without any quarrell, and commit fowlest adoultries by sutlest

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\* The title of this first edition, as gathered from the prologue and colophon, has been thus given by Mr. Dibdin:—

"A BOOK OF THE NOBLE HYSTORYES OF KYNGE ARTHUR, and of certeyn of his knyghtes. Whiche book was reduced in to englyshe by syr Thomas Malory knyght and by me devyded into XXI bookes chapytred and enprynted, and fynysshed in th abbey Westmestre the last day of Juyl the yere of our lord M.CCCC. lxxxv.. FOLIO."—Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 241.



shifts: as, Syr Lancelote with the wife of King Arthure, his maister: Syr Tristram with the wife of King Marke, his uncle: Syr Lamerche with the wife of King Lote, that was his own aunte. This is good stuffe for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at. Yet I knowe when God's Bible was banished the court and Morte Arthure receaved into the princes chamber, what toyes the dayly reading of such a booke may worke in the will of a yong gentleman, or a yong maide, that liveth welthely and idly, wise men can judge, and honest men do pittie \*;” and the latter declaring in his “Wits’ Commonwealth,” that “as the Lord de la Nonne in the sixe discourse of his politike and military discourses censureth of the bookes of Amadis de Gaule, which he saith are no less hurtfull to youth, than the workes of Machiavell, to age; so these bookes are accordingly to be censured of, whose names follow; Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwicke, *Arthur of the Round Table*, &c. †

That these strictures are too severe, and that the consequences apprehended by these ingenious scholars did not necessarily follow, we have the authority of Milton to prove; who, so far from deprecating the study of romances as dangerous to morality, declares “that even those books proved to me so many enticements to the love and stedfast observation of virtue ‡;” a passage which appears to have kindled in the mind of a modern writer, a spirited defence of the utility of these productions, even at the present day. “There is yet a point of view,” he remarks, “in which Romance may be regarded to advantage, even in the present age. The most interesting qualities in a chivalrous knight, are his high-toned enthusiasm, and disinterested spirit of adventure — qualities to which, when properly modified and directed, society owes its highest improvements. Such are the feelings of benevolent genius yearning to diffuse love and peace and happiness among the human race. The gorgeous visions of the

\* Ascham's Works, Bennet's edit. p. 254.

† Vide p. 268.

‡ Toland's Life of Milton, p. 35.

imagination, familiar to the enthusiastic soul, purify the heart from selfish pollutions, and animate to great and beneficent action. Indeed, nothing great or eminently beneficial ever has been, or can be effected without enthusiasm — without feelings more exalted than the consideration of simple matter of fact can produce. That Romances have a tendency to excite the enthusiastic spirit, we have the evidence of fact in numerous instances. Hereafter, we shall hear the great Milton indirectly bearing his testimony of admiration and gratitude for their inspiring influence. It is of little consequence, comparatively speaking, whether all the impressions made, be founded in strict philosophical truth. If the imagination be awakened and the heart warmed, we need give ourselves little concern about the final result. The first object is to elicit power. Without power nothing can be accomplished. Should the heroic spirit chance to be excited by reading Romances, we have, alas! too much occasion for that spirit even in modern times, to wish to repress its generation. Since the Gallic hero has cast his malign aspect over the nations, it is become almost as necessary to social security, as during the barbarism of the feudal times. There is now little danger of its being directed to an *unintelligible* purpose.

“Romances, then, not only merit attention, as enabling us to enter into the feelings and sentiments of our ancestors, — a circumstance in itself curious, and even necessary to a complete knowledge of the history of past ages; they may still be successfully employed to awaken the mind—to inspire genius: and when this effect is produced, the power thus created may be easily made to bear on any point desired.”\*

The demand for *Morte Arthur*, which continued for nearly two centuries, produced of course several re-impressions: the *second* issued from the press of Winkin de Worde in 1498, the colophon of which, as specified by Herbert, is singularly curious. “Here is the

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\* Burnet's Specimens of English Prose Writers, vol. i. p. 287—289.



ende of the hoole boke of kynge Arthur, and of his noble knyghtes of the rounde table. That whane they were hoole togyder, there was ever an c. and xi. And here is the ende of the deth of Arthur. I praye you all gentylnen and gentylwymmen that rede thys boke of Arthur and his knyghtes from the beginnyng to the endyng praye for me whyle I am a lyue, that, God send me good utterance. And when I am deed, I pray you all pray for my soule: for the translacion of this boke was fynished the ix. yere of the regne of kyng Edward the fourth, by syr Thomas Maleore knyght, as Jhesu helpe him for his grete myghte, as he is the servaunt of Jhesu bothe day and nyghte. Emprynted fyrst by William Caxton, on whose soul God have mercy." \*

The re-impression of *De Worde* was followed by the editions of *Copland*, *East*, and *William Stansby*, this last being dated 1634. Of the elder copies *East's* was probably the one most generally used in the reign of Elizabeth, and it differs only in a few unessential phrases from the edition of Caxton.

*La Morte D'Arthur*, which, by its frequent republication, kept alive a taste for romantic fiction, may be considered as giving us, with a few exceptions as to costume, a very pleasing though somewhat polished picture of the chivalric romance of the Anglo-Norman period. It has the merit also of furnishing an excellent specimen of purity and simplicity in style and diction; qualities which have stamped upon many of its otherwise extravagant details the most decided features of sublimity and pathos. A passage in the twenty-second chapter of the second book, for example, furnishes a noble instance of the former, and the speech of Sir Bohort, over the dead body of Sir Launcelot, towards the close of the work, is as admirable a specimen of the latter. These, as short, peculiarly interesting, and characteristic of the work, we shall venture to transcribe.

The description of, and the effect arising from, so simple a circumstance as that of blowing a horn, are thus painted: —

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\* Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 81, 82.



“ So hee rode forth, and within three days hee came by a cross, and thereon was letters of gold written, that said, It is not for a knight alone to ride toward this castle. Then saw hee an old hoar gentleman coming toward him, that said, Balin le Savage, thou passest thy bounds this way, therefore turn againe and it will availe thee. And hee vanished away anon; and so hee heard an horne blow as it had been the death of a beast. That blast, said Balin, is blown for mee; for I am the prize, and yet am I not dead.”

Sir Ector de Maris, the brother of Sir Launcelot, after having sought him in vain through Britain for seven years, has at length the melancholy satisfaction of recognising the body of the hero, who had just breathed his last.

“ And then Sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helme, from him. And when hee beheld Sir Launcelot's visage, hee fell downe in a sowne. And when hee awaked, it were hard for any tongue to tell the dolefull complaints that he made for his brother. Ah Sir Launcelot, said hee, thou were head of all christian knights, and now I dare say, said Sir Bors, that Sir Launcelot, there thou liest thou were never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou were the curtiest knight that ever beare shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrod horse, and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever stroke with sword. And thou were the goodliest parson that ever came among presse of knights. And thou were the meekest man and the gentlest that ever eate in hall among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortall foe that ever put speare in the rest.”\*

We have taken the more notice of this work, not only as it affords a pretty correct idea of what the old chivalric metrical romance consisted, but as it was in Shakspeare's time the favourite book in this branch of literature, and furnished Spenser with many incidents

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\* Book III. chap. 176.



for his "*Faerie Queene*." \* It constitutes, in fact, an exemplar and abridgment of the marvels of the Round Table, such as were dispersed through a variety of metrical tales, and can only be found condensed in this production, and of which the popularity may be considered as an indubitable mark of the taste of the age in which it was so much admired and cherished.

If it be objected, that, though *Morte Arthur* was very popular, it did not originate during our period, it may be answered, that many prose imitations of the Anglo-Norman romance, the undoubted offspring of the Elizabethan era, might, if necessary, be mentioned; but one will suffice, and this has been selected from its having maintained an influence over the public mind nearly as long as the *Death of Arthur*.

We allude to the well-known romance entitled *The Seven Champions of Christendome*, written in the age of Elizabeth by Richard Johnson, the author of various other productions during this and the subsequent reign. In what year the first part of the *Seven Champions* made its appearance is not known; but the second was published with the following title and date:—"The Second Part of the famous History of the Seven Champions of Christendome. Likewise shewing the princely Prowesse of Saint George's three Sonnes, the lively Sparke of Nobilitie. With many memoriall atchieuements worthy the Golden Spurres of Knighthood. Lond. Printed for Cuthbert Burbie, &c. 1597." 4to. Black letter.† If Mr. Warton's opinion be correct, that Spenser was indebted to this work for some incidents in the conduct of his *Faerie Queene*, the first part must have been printed before 1590; and Mr. Todd, indeed, seems to think that the second part "was published some time after the first‡;" a supposition which is corroborated by the

\* Vide Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, and Todd's edition of Spenser's *Works*, vol. ii. p. lxviii.

† Vide *Bibliotheca Reediana*, No. 2670, and Todd's *Spenser*, vol. ii. p. lxvii. note *k*.

‡ Todd's *Spenser*, vol. ii. p. lxvii. note.

address to the reader prefixed to the second part, in which, after mentioning "*the great acceptance of his First Part*," he nevertheless deprecates the severity of criticism to which it had been exposed: "thy courtesy," he says, "must be my buckler against the carping malice of mocking jesters, that being worse able to do well, scoff commonly at that they cannot mend, censuring all things, doing nothing, but, monkey-like, make apish jests at any thing they see in print: and nothing pleaseth them, except it savour of a scoffing or invective spirit;" passages which indicate that the first part of this romance had been for some length of time before the public. We may also add, that Johnson is known to have been a popular writer in 1592, having published in that year his "*Nine Worthies of London*."

If we except *La Morte D'Arthur*, and one or two Spanish romances, which will be afterwards mentioned, the *Seven Champions* appears to have been the most popular book of its class. It has accumulated in a small compass the most remarkable adventures of the ancient metrical romances, and has related them in a rich and figurative, though somewhat turgid style. Justice has been done to this compilation, once so high in repute, both by Percy and Warton: the former speaks of its "strong Gothic painting," and of its adherence to the old poetical legends\*; and the latter declares it to contain "some of the most capital fictions of the old Arabian romance," and instances the adventure of the ENCHANTED FOUNTAIN.†

The various editions of this once celebrated compilation attest the longevity of its fame; and though now no longer the amusement of the learned and the great, yet is it far from being a stranger to the literature of our juvenile libraries. A London impression appeared in 1755, and it has lately been reprinted in a pocket-edition of the *British Classics*.

Having thus brought forward *La Morte D'Arthur* and the *Seven*

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\* Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 217.

† Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 230. note.



*Champions* as the most popular *prose* compilations in Shakspeare's time from the *Anglo-Norman* metrical romances, we shall proceed to notice two collections which were more immediately built on an ORIENTAL foundation, and which have enjoyed, both at the epoch of their first translation into English in the sixteenth century, and subsequently to a very modern date, an almost unrivalled circulation.

A little anterior to the birth of our great poet, W. Copland printed, without date, a romance entitled *The Seven Wise Masters*, a direct version from the Latin of a book published in Germany, soon after the discovery of the art of printing, under the appellation of *Historia Septem Sapientum*." This interesting series of tales has been traced by Mr. Douce\* to an *Indian* prototype; to "The Book of the Seven Counsellors, or Parables of SENDEBAR or SANDABAR," an Indian philosopher, who is supposed to have lived about a century before the Christian æra. The work of this sage, it appears, had been early translated into Persic, Syriac, Arabic, and, from this latter, into Hebrew by Rabbi Joel, under the title of *Mischle Sandabar*, a version which is conjectured to have been made about the middle of the fourteenth century, and is believed to be the only oriental manuscript of these Parables which has been subjected to the press; having been printed at Constantinople in 1517, and at Venice in 1544 and 1608. A MS. of this Hebrew Sandabar is in the British Museum (Harleian MSS., No. 5449.), but no English version of it has been hitherto attempted.

The romance of our Indian fabulist made its next appearance, though with some alterations in the incidents and names, in *Greek*, under the title of *Syntipas*, of which many MSS. exist, the greater number professing to be translated from the Syriac; but in the British Museum is preserved a copy from the Persic, of so late a date as 1667.

The first *Latin* version is said to have proceeded from the pen of

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\* Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, vol. iii. p. 4. et seq.

Jean de Hauteselve, a native of Lorraine, but the existence of such a copy is now only known, from its having been translated into *French* verse, by an ecclesiastic of the name of Herbers, who died 1226, and who, in the opening of his poem, to which he has given the singular title of *Dolopatos*, confesses to have taken it from the "*bel Latin*" of Hauteselve.

Another *French* version, however, of greater importance, as it makes a nearer approach to the remote original, and has been the source of numerous imitations, is preserved in the French National Library, and numbered 7595. It is a MS. in verse, of the 13th century, and was first noticed by Mr. Ellis, through a communication from Mr. Douce, who believes it to be not only the immediate original of many imitations in French prose, but the source whence an old English metrical romance in the Cotton Library (Galba, E. 9.) has been taken.

This poem, a large fragment of which exists in the Auchinleck MS., is entire in the Cotton Library, and is written in lines of eight syllables. It is entitled "The Proces of the Sevyne Sages," and Mr. Ellis refers its composition to a period not later than 1330. \*

The copy, however, which has given rise to the greatest number of translations, is that already mentioned under the title of "*Historia Septem Sapientum*," the first edition of which, with a date, was published by John Hoelhoff at Cologne in 1490. This was very rapidly transfused into the German, Dutch, Italian, French, Spanish, English, and Scotch languages.

Of the *Scotch* version, which is metrical, and was undertaken by the translator "at the request of his *Ant Cait* (Aunt Kate) in Tansteloun Castle, during the siege of Leith," 1560, the first edition was printed at Edinburgh in 1578, with the following title:—"THE SEVIN SEAGES, TRANSLATIT OUT OF PROIS IN SCOTTIS METER, BE JOHNE ROLLAND, IN DALKEITH; with ane Moralitye after everie Doctouris tale, and siclike after the Empryce tale, togidder with ane loving and

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\* Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 223.



laude to everie Doctour after his awin tale, and ane exclamation and outcrying when the Empreouris wife after hir fals construsit tale. Imprentit at Edinburgh be John Ros, for Henry Charteries." \*

The prose translation by Copland, which made its appearance between the years 1550 and 1567, under the title of "The Seven Wise Masters," was one of the most popular books of the sixteenth century. It has undergone a variety of re-impressions, and when no longer occupying its former place in the hall of the Baron and the Squire, descending to a less ambitious station, it became the most delectable volume in the collection of the School-boy. This change in the field of its influence seems to have taken place in little better than a century after its introduction into the English language; for in 1674, Francis Kirkman, publishing a version from the Italian copy of this romance, which he entitles the "History of Prince Erastus, son to the emperor Diocletian, and those famous philosophers called The Seven Wise Masters of Rome," informs us, in his preface, "that the book of 'The Seven Wise Masters' is in such estimation in Ireland, that it was always put into the hands of young children immediately after the horn-book." †

The "Book of the Seven Counsellors," in short, appears to have been familiarised in the language of every civilised nation in Asia and Europe, and though often interpolated and disguised by the admixture of fables from other oriental collections, and especially from the fables of Pilpay, it has still preserved, through every transfusion, a resemblance of its Indian type. Its admission into English literature contributed to cherish and keep alive the taste for Eastern romance, which had been generated during the period of the Crusades, and adopted by the Anglo-Norman minstrels.

If the collection of oriental apologues, to which we have alluded under the name of Pilpay, had been as early naturalised amongst us,

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\* This short summary has been drawn up from the larger account detailed by Mr. Ellis in his *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, vol. iii. p. 1—22.

† Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, vol. iii. p. 17.

the effect in favour of oriental fable would probably have been greater ; but it was the fate of this work, though superior in merit perhaps, and of equal antiquity and similar origin with the Parables of Sandabar, and alike popular in the East, not to have acquired an English dress until the eighteenth century. The Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma, the undoubted source of Pilpay's stories, we, at length, possess, in a correct state, forming certainly the most interesting series of fables extant. \*

There is another set of tales, however, in their complection almost entirely oriental, which not only co-operated in their effect, but also in their period of introduction, with the "Seven Wise Masters," from the press of Copland.

In 1577 Richard Robinson, a voluminous author who lived by his pen, published "A record of ancyent historyes intituled in Latin *Gesta Romanorum*;" and in a catalogue of his productions, written by himself, and preserved in the British Museum, he says of this work that it was "translated (auctore ut supponitur Iohane Leylando antiquario) by mee perused corrected and bettered." †

This is a partial version of one of two distinct works entitled, *Gesta Romanorum*, collections of tales in the Latin language which, there is reason to suppose, originated in the fourteenth century, and certainly once enjoyed the highest popularity.

Of the *first*, or what may be called the *Continental Gesta*, Mr. Warton has given us a very elaborate and pleasing analysis. No manuscript of this primary collection is known to exist, but it was printed about 1473; the first six editions of it are in folio

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\* The common version of Pilpay was published in 1747. It should be remarked, however, that a translation from the Italian of Doni, containing many of the fables of Pilpay, and professedly rendered by Doni, from the *Directorium Humanæ Vitæ, vel Parabole Antiquorum Sapientum*, was given in English by Sir Thomas North, 4to. 1570, and 1601, under the title of the "Moral Philosophy of Doni." From this source, therefore, Shakspeare and his contemporaries may have been partially acquainted with this collection of tales.

† Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 424.



without dates ; three containing 152 chapters or gests each, and three 181 each, and of those printed with dates, in folio, quarto, octavo, and duodecimo, a list, amounting to twenty-eight, has been published by Mr. Douce, from the year 1480 to 1555 inclusive. A Dutch translation appeared in 1481 ; a German translation in 1489 ; the first French translation with a date in 1521 ; but no English translation until 1703, when only forty-five histories or gests were published, the translator, either from want of encouragement, or from some other cause, having only printed volume the first of his intended version.

The *second* or *English Gesta* must be considered as the discovery of Mr. Douce, for Warton, not perceiving its frequent discrepancy, had confounded it with the original work. It is likewise remarkable, that the circumstances attending its circulation are diametrically different from those accompanying the prior collection ; for while numerous MSS. of the English Gesta exist in this country, not one copy in the original Latin has been printed.

It appears from the researches of Mr. Douce, that this compilation very soon followed the original Gesta, and that the first manuscript may with great probability be ascribed to a period as early as the reign of Richard the Second ; most of the MSS. however, none of which have ever been found upon the continent, are of the age of fifth and sixth Henries, and of these twenty-five are yet remaining preserved in the British Museum, at Oxford, and in other collections.

As the English Gesta was intended as an imitation of the *Continental* collection, many of its stories have, of course, been retained ; but these have undergone such alterations in language, and sometimes in incident, together with new moralizations, and new names, as to give it, with the addition of forty tales not found in its prototype, the air of an original work. \* It is not, however, so exten-

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\* Two of these tales, chap. 31. and 32. are immediately taken from *The Seven Wise Masters*, and may be found also in the Arabian Nights and Pilpay's Fables.

sive as the foreign compilation, the most complete manuscripts containing only one hundred and two stories; yet as the sources from which it has drawn its materials are, with a few exceptions, correspondent, in respect to their oriental origin, with the continental copy, the character which Mr. Warton has given of the primary, will apply to the secondary, series.

"This work," he observes. "is compiled from the obsolete Latin chronicles of the later Roman or rather German story, heightened by romantic inventions, from Legends of the Saints, oriental apologues, and many of the shorter fictitious narratives which came into Europe with the Arabian literature, and were familiar in the ages of ignorance and imagination. The classics are sometimes cited for authorities; but these are of the lower order, such as Valerius Maximus, Macrobius, Aulus Gellius, Seneca, Pliny, and Boethius. To every tale a *Moralization* is subjoined, reducing it into a christian or moral lesson.

"Most of the oriental apologues are taken from the CLERICALIS DISCIPLINA, or a Latin Dialogue between an Arabian Philosopher and Edric\* his son, never printed†, written by Peter Alphonsus, a baptized Jew, at the beginning of the twelfth century, and collected from Arabian fables, apothegms, and examples.‡ Some are also borrowed from an old Latin translation of the CALILAH U DAMNAH, a celebrated set of eastern fables, to which Alphonsus was indebted.

"On the whole, this is the collection in which a curious enquirer might expect to find the original of Chaucer's Cambuscan: —

\* "Edric was the name of *Enoch* among the Arabians, to whom they attribute many fabulous compositions. Herbelot, in V.—Lydgate's *Chorle* and *The Bird* is taken from the *Clericalis Disciplina*."

† "MSS. Harl. 3861, and in many other libraries. It occurs in old French verse, MSS. Digb. 86. membrar. "*Le Romaune de Peres Aunfour coment il aprist et chastia son fils belement*."

‡ "See Tyrwhitt's Chaucer, vol. iv. p. 325. seq."



“ Or, — if aught else great bards beside  
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
 Of turneys and of trophies hung,  
 Of forests and enchantments drear,  
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.”\*

Of the translations of the *English Gesta*, which, owing to the Latin original not being known upon the continent, are solely confined to the English language, three only have been noticed; and of these, the first is a manuscript in the Harleian collection, No. 7,333, of the age of Henry the Sixth, containing but seventy stories, and which Mr. Douce conjectures to have been produced either by Lydgate, Gower, or Occleve, as the *English Gesta* appears familiar to them, and this version possesses not only several pieces by Lydgate, but some tales from the *Confessio Amantis* of Gower.†

The first printed translation is said to have issued from the press of Wynkyn de Worde, though without a date, and this edition has been mentioned and referred to, both by Mr. Warton‡ and Dr. Farmer.§ Neither Herbert, however, nor Mr. Dibdin, has been fortunate enough to detect its existence, and if it really had, or has, a being, it is probably either the manuscript version of the reign of Henry the Sixth, or the translation to which Robinson alludes as the work of Leland the antiquary.

We must, therefore, look to Robinson's Translation of 1577, as the only one which has met with a general and undisputed circulation; and this was so popular, that in 1601 it had been printed six times by Thomas Easte. || The most enlarged edition, however, of

\* Milton's "Il Penseroso." Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. Dissertation on the *Gesta Romanorum*, p. v. vi.

† Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 422.

‡ *History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 18. vol. iii. p. lxxxiii.

§ Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. vii. p. 229.

|| According to his own assertion, in the MS. catalogue of his works in the British Museum, to which he has given the title of *Eupolemia*. See Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 423. 425.



Robinson's version, contains but forty-four stories, and it is, therefore, much to be regretted, that the Harleian manuscript is not committed to the press.

As this was then the only English translation accessible to the public, of a collection of tales which in the original Latin, and under the same name, had amused the learned and the curious for some centuries, both on the continent, and for nearly the same space of time on our own island, we shall not be surprised if we find, in a subsequent page, that Shakspeare has availed himself of a portion of its contents, especially as its subjects, and the mode of treating them, coincided with his track of reading.

The popularity of Robinson's work seems to have extended to the eighteenth century; for the last edition, which we can now recollect, is dated 1703, and there is reason to think it the fifteenth, while the edition immediately preceding was published in 1689, but fourteen years anteriorly.

If Ascham thought he had reason to complain of the popularity of *Morte Arthur*, and its associates, he found tenfold cause of complaint in the daily increasing circulation of ITALIAN ROMANCES AND TALES; "ten *La Morte d'Arthures*," he exclaims, "doe not the tenth parte so much harme, as one of these bookes made in *Italie*, and translated in *Englande*." \*

The frequent communication indeed with Italy, which took place about the middle of the sixteenth century, had not only induced an indiscriminate imitation of Italian manners, but had rendered the literature of the Italians so fashionable, that, together with their poetry, was imported into this island a multiplicity of their *prose* fictions and tales, a species of composition that had been cultivated in Italy with incredible ardour from the period of Sacchetti and Boccacio.

These tales, by blending with the romantic fiction of the Normans and Orientals the scenes of domestic life and manners; by introduc-

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\* Ascham's Schole Master, Bennet's edit. 4to. p. 255.



ing greater complexity and skill in the arrangement of fable and greater probability in the nature and construction of incident; by intermingling more frequent and more interesting traits of the softer passions, and by exciting more powerfully the emotions of pity and compassion, presented to the public a new and poignant source of gratification, and furnished the dramatic poets and the caterers for the then universal appetite for story-telling with innumerable bases for plays, tales, and ballads.\*

It may be asserted, we believe, with a close approach to accuracy, that in the space which elapsed between the middle of the sixteenth century, and the accession of James the First, nearly all the most striking fictions of the Italian novellists had found their way to the English press; either immediately translated from the original Italian, or through the medium of Latin, French, or Spanish versions.

Of these curious collections of prose narrative, real or imaginary, comic or tragic, it will be thought necessary that we should notice a few of the most valuable, and especially those to which our great poet has been most indebted.

One of the earliest of these works and mentioned by Laneham in 1575, as an article in Captain Cox's library, was entitled *The Hundred Merry Tales*. This series of stories, though existing in English so late as 1659†, is now unfortunately lost; the probability, however, is, that

\* A writer, whose work has just fallen into my hands, closes a long and accurate analysis of the Italian Tales, with the following just observations:—"The larger works of fiction," he remarks, "resemble those productions of a country which are consumed within itself, while tales, like the more delicate and precious articles of traffic, which are exported from their native soil, have gladdened and delighted every land. They are the ingredients from which Shakspeare, and other enchanters of his day, have distilled those magical drops which tend so much to sweeten the lot of humanity, by occasionally withdrawing the mind, from the cold and naked realities of life, to visionary scenes and visionary bliss."—Dunlop's History of Fiction, vol. ii. p. 409.

† "In The London Chaunticlères, 1659, this work, among others," remarks Mr. Stevens, "is cried for sale by a ballad-man; The Seven Wise Men of Gotham; a Hundred merry Tales; Scoggin's Jestes," &c.—See Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 42.



it was a translation from *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, printed at Paris before the year 1500, and compiled from Italian writers. The English copy, says Warton, was licensed to be printed by John Waly, in 1557, under the title of "A Hundreth mery tales," together with *The freere and the boye, stans puer ad mensam, and youthe, charite, and humylite*.<sup>\*</sup> It is again noticed in the register of the Stationers' Company for 1581, by Ames, under the article for James Roberts, and in the following manner in a black-letter pamphlet of 1586:—"Wee want not also pleasant mad headed knaves that bee properly learned and well reade in diverse pleasant bookes and good authors. As Sir Guy of Warwicke, the Foure Sons of Aymon, the Ship of Fooles, the Budget of Demandes, *the Hundredth merry Tales*, the Booke of Ryddles, and many other excellent writers both witty and pleasaunt."<sup>†</sup> It is alluded to by Shakspeare, in his *Much Ado about Nothing*, written about 1600, where Beatrice complains of Benedict having declared, that she had "her good wit out of the *Hundred Merry Tales*."<sup>‡</sup> That this collection was justly entitled to the epithet *merry* has been proved by Mr. Douce, from a reference to the supposed original, in which only five stories out of the hundred are of a tragic cast, and where the title, in the old editions, gives further propriety to the appellation, by terming these tales *Comptes plaisans et recreatiz pour deviser en toutes compaignies, et Moult plaisans á raconter par maniere de joyeuseté*.<sup>§</sup> It should not be forgotten, however, that the work entitled *Cento novelle antiche* was in existence at this period, though no translation of it is known to have been made, either before or during Shakspeare's age; nor is it improbable that the term *A hundred merry tales*, might have become a kind of cant expression for an attack of personal satire; for Nashe, as Mr. Douce has observed, "in his *Pappe with an hatchet*,

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<sup>\*</sup> History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 475.

<sup>†</sup> The English Courtier and the Cuntrey Gentleman, sig. H. 4. See Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 43. note.

<sup>‡</sup> Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 42. Act ii. sc. 1.      <sup>§</sup> Illustrations, vol. i. p. 166.



speaks of a book then coming out under the title of *A hundred merrie tales*, in which Martin Marprelate, i. e. John Penry, and his friends, were to be satirized." \*

Though no complete translation of the Decameron of Boccaccio was executed before 1620, the greater part of his novels was given to the public in 1566, by *William Paynter*, in his once popular collection, entitled "*The Pallace of Pleasure*." This entertaining work occupies two volumes, 4to.; of which, the first, dedicated to Lord Warwick, appeared in the year above-mentioned, "containing *sixty* novels out of Boccaccio," and the second followed in 1567, including thirty-four novels, principally from *Bandello*, and dedicated to Sir George Howard. It appears to have been the intention of the compiler to have added a third part; for at the close of the second volume, he tells us, "Bicause sodeynly, contrary to expectation, this volume is risen to greater heape of leaves, I doe omit for this present time *Sundry Novels* of mery devize, reserving the same to be joyned with the rest of an other part, wherein shall succcede the remnant of *Bandello*, specially sutch, suffrable, as the learned French man *François de Belleforrest* hath selected, and the choyssest done in the Italian. Some also out of *Erizzo*, *Ser Giouanni Florentino*, *Parabosco*, *Cynthio*, *Straparole*, *Sansovino*, and the best liked out of the *Queene of Nauarre*, and others;" a passage which is important, as showing, in a small compass, the nature and extent of his resources.

What motive prevented the continuance of the work, is unascertained; it certainly could not be want of encouragement, for a second edition of the first volume, and a third of the second, were published together in 4to. in 1575, and, as the author informs us in his title, "eftsones perused, corrected, and augmented" by him. The conjecture of Warton, that Painter, "in compliance with the prevailing mode of publication, and for the accommodation of universal readers,

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\* Illustrations, vol. i. p. 168.

was afterward persuaded to print his *sundry novels* in the perishable form of separate pamphlets," is not improbable.

The *Palace of Pleasure* is, without doubt, not only one of the earliest, but one of the most valuable selections of tales which appeared during the reign of Elizabeth; and that it formed one of the ornaments of Shakspeare's library, and one to which he was in the habit of referring, the industry of his commentators has sufficiently established.\*

In the same year with the second volume of Painter's *Palace*, appeared "*Certaine Tragicall Discourses*" by Geffray Fenton, in one volume 4to. bl. letter. This *passing pleasant booke*, as Turberville terms it, consists of stories principally from Italian writers, and, in the dedication to Lady Mary Sydney, the author expresses his high opinion of their merit, by declaring, "neyther do I thinke that oure Englishe recordes are hable to yelde at this daye a *Romant* more delicat and chaste, treatynge of the veraye theame and effectes of love, than theis *Hystories*;" an estimate of the value of his collection in which he is borne out by his friend Turberville, who, in one of the commendatory poems prefixed to the book, says —

"The learned stories erste, and sugred tales that laye  
Removde from simple common sence, this writer doth displaye:  
Nowe men of meanest skill, what Bandel wrought may vew,  
And tell the tale in Englishe well, that erst they never knewe:  
Discourse of sundrye strange, and tragicall affaires,  
Of lovyng ladyes hepleess haps, theyr deathes, and deadly cares."

Mr. Warton is of opinion that Fenton's compilation "in point of selection and size" is "perhaps the most capital miscellany of this kind."† In size, however, it is certainly inferior to Painter's work, and from a survey of its contents with which we have been indulged, exhibits, in our conception, no superiority to its predecessor even with regard to selection; it merits, however, the same honour which is now paying to its rival, that of a re-print.

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\* The Roxburghe copy of the *Palace of Pleasure* produced the sum of 42*l*.

† History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 478.



In 1571 a series of tales, somewhat similar to Fenton's, was published under the title of "*The Forest* or collection of Historyes no lesse profitable, than pleasant and necessary, doone out of Frenche into English by *Thomas Fortescue*." This production, which forms a quarto in black letter, and underwent a second, and a third edition, in 1576 and 1596, includes many stories manifestly of Italian birth and structure, though the work is said to have been originally written in the Spanish language.

On the authority of Bishop Tanner, as reported by Warton \*, we have to ascribe to the year 1580, a prose version of the *Novelle* of *Bandello*, next to Boccaccio the most celebrated, at that period, among the Italian novellists; and more chaste perhaps than any of them in his sentiments, and more easy and natural in the construction of his incidents. The translation is said to be by W. W. initials which Mr. Warton is inclined to appropriate, either to William Warner or William Webbe.

Another collection of tales, several of which are from Giraldi Cinthio and other Italian fabulists, was given to the public by *George Whetstone*, in 1582, under the appellation of *Heptameron*, a term which had been rendered fashionable by the popularity of a suite of tales published at Paris in 1560, and entitled, "*Heptameron des Nouvelles de la Royne de Navarre*." Whetstone possessed no inconsiderable reputation in his day; he has been praised as a poet by Meres and Webbe, and his *Heptameron*, though written in prose, with only the occasional interspersions of poetry, had its share of contemporary fame, and the still greater celebrity of furnishing some portion of a plot to our great dramatic bard.†

The first volume of a large collection of Italian tales made its appearance at Paris in 1583, under the title of *Cent Histoires*

\* History of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 473.

† Ritson thinks that Whetstone's *Heptameron* was republished in 1593, under the title of "*Aurelia*." In the Roxburghe Library, No. 6392, this romance is termed "*The Paragon of Pleasure, or the Christmas Pleasures of Queene Aurelia*," 4to. 1593.



*Tragiques*. This work, the compilation of *Francis de Belleforrest* and *Boisteau*, was ultimately extended to seven volumes, and a part of it, if not the whole, appears, on the authority of the Stationers' Register, to have been translated into English, in 1596.\* The edition, however, to which Warton alludes, must have been posthumous; for Belleforrest died on January 1st, 1583, and that he had printed selections from the Italian novellists long anterior, is evident from Painter's reference to them in the second volume of his *Palace of Pleasure*, dated 1567. Probably what the historian terms the "*grand repository*" commenced with the copy of 1583.†

Independent of these large prose collections of Italian tales, a vast variety of separate stories was in circulation from the same source; and many of our poets, such as Gascoigne, Turberville, &c.‡ amused themselves by giving them a metrical and sometimes a semi-metrical,

\* Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 487.

† Of the Italian tales it may be useful to enumerate the best and most celebrated of those which were written during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; as, in some shape or other, most of them became familiar to English readers before the death of Shakspeare.

1. *Cento Novelle Antike*. The earliest collection of Italian novels.

2. *Boccaccio il Decamerone*. Venet. Valdarfer. 1471. This, which is the first edition, was purchased at the Roxburghe sale, by the Marquis of Blandford, for 2260*l.*!

3. *Novelle di Sacchetti*. Sacchetti died in 1408.

4. *Masuccio, Il Novellino*, nel quale si contengono cinquanta Novelle.— Best edition that of 1484, folio.

5. *Sabadino, Porretane*, dove si narra Novelle settanta una.

6. *Sansovino, Cento Novelle scelte da più nobili Scrittori*.

7. *Giovanni Fiorentino, il Pecorone*, nel quale si contengono cinquanta Novelle antiche. First and best edition, 1559.

8. *Novelle del Bandello*, 3 vols. 4to. 1554.

9. *Straparola, le piacevoli Notte*. 2 vols. 1557.

10. *Giraldi Cinthio, gli Hecatombithi*, (Cento Novelle.) 4 vols.

11. *Erizzo, le Sei Giornate*. (trenta cinque Novelle) Edizione prim. 4to. Ven. 1567.

12. *Parabosco, i Diporti, o varo Novelle*, Venet. 1558.

13. *Granucci, la piacirol Notte, et lieto Giorno* (undici Novelle), Venet. 1574.

14. *Novelle di Ascanio de Mori*. 4to. 1585.

15. *Malespini, Ducento Novelle*, 4to.

‡ Vide Gascoigne's Tale of Ferdinando Jeronimi, from the Italian riding tales of Bartello, in his "*Weedes*," and Turberville's "*Tragical Tales*, translated out of sundrie Italians," 1587.



form. By these means the more rugged features of the Anglo-Norman romance, were softened down, and a style of fiction introduced more varied and more consonant to nature.

The taste, however, for the wild beauties of Gothic fabling, though polished and refined by the elegant imagination of the Italians, was still cultivated with ardour, and, towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, was further stimulated, by a fresh infusion of similar imagery, through the medium of the *Spanish and Portuguese Romances*.

These elaborate, and sometimes very interesting productions, are evidently constructed on the model of the Anglo-Norman romance, though with greater unity of design, and with more attention to morality. There is reason to believe, with Mr. Tyrwhitt, that neither Spain nor Portugal can produce a romance of this species older than the era of printing\*; for the manuscript of *Amadis of Gaul*, which has been satisfactorily proved by Mr. Southey to have been the production of Vasco Lobeira, and written in the Portuguese language, during the close of the fourteenth century†, was never printed, and is supposed to be no longer in existence; while the Spanish version of Garciordonez de Montalvo, the oldest extant, and which has, in general, passed for the original, did not issue from the press before the year 1510, the date of its publication at Salamanca.

This romance, beyond all doubt the most interesting of its ‡ class, is well known as one of the very few in Don Quixote's library which escaped the merciless fury of the Licentiate and the Barber. "The first that master Nicholas put into his hands was Amadis de Gaul in four parts; and the priest said, 'There seems to be some mystery in this; for, as I have heard say, this was the first book of chivalry

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 221.

† Vide Aikin's General Biography, vol. vi. article Lobeira.

‡ "Amadis of Gaul," remarks Mr. Southey, "is among prose, what Orlando Furioso is among metrical Romances, not the oldest of its kind, but the best."—Preliminary Essay to his Translation, 4 vols. 1803.

"This" (Amadis de Gaul), says Mr. Burnet, "is perhaps one of the most beautiful books that ever was written."—Specimens of English Prose Writers, vol. i. p. 289. note.

printed in Spain, and all the rest have had their foundation and rise from it ; and, therefore, I think, as head of so pernicious a sect, we ought to condemn him to the fire without mercy.' — ' Not so, sir,' said the barber ; ' for I have heard also, that it is the best of all the books of this kind ; and therefore, as being singular in his art, he ought to be spared.' — ' It is true,' said the priest, ' and for that reason his life is granted him.' \* Nor is the description which Sir Philip Sidney has given of the effects of *Amadis* on its readers less important than the encomium of Cervantes on its literary merit ; " Truly," says the knight, " I have known men, that even with reading *Amadis de Gaul*, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage." †

The introduction of *Amadis* into the English language took place in the year 1592, when the first four or five books were translated from the French version and printed by Wolfe. ‡ It experienced the same popularity here which had attended its naturalisation in France, Italy, and Spain, and seems to have been in the zenith of its reputation among us at the close of the Shakspearean era ; for Fynes Moryson, who published his *Itinerary* in 1617, in his directions to a traveller how to acquire languages, says, " I think no book better for his discourse than *Amadis of Gaul* ; for the knights errant, and the ladies of courts, doe therein exchange courtly speeches, and these books are in all languages translated by the masters of eloquence ;" and Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, written about the same period, mentions *Amadis* along with *Huon of Bourdeaux*, as one of the most fashionable volumes of his day. Such, indeed, is the merit of this romance, that the lapse of four hundred years has not greatly diminished its attractions, and the admirable version of Mr. Southey, which, by rejecting or veiling the occasional indelicacy of the original,

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\* Jervis's Translation of *Don Quixote*, vol. i. chap. 6.

† Sir Philip Sidney's Works, fol. edit. of 1629. p. 551.

‡ This version, which was reprinted in 1618, is by Anthony Munday.



has removed the weightiest objections of Ascham, most deservedly finds admirers even in the nineteenth century.

Another specimen of this class of romances of nearly equal popularity with the preceding, though inferior in point of merit, may be instanced in the once celebrated *Palmerin of England*, which, like Amadis of Gaul, safely passed the ordeal of the Curate of Don Quixote's village :—" Let Palmerin of England," says the Licentiate, " be preserved, and kept as a singular piece : and let such another case be made for it, as that which Alexander found among the spoils of Darius, and appropriated to preserve the works of the poet Homer. — Therefore, Master Nicholas, saving your better judgment, let this and Amadis de Gaul be exempted from the fire, and let all the rest perish without any further enquiry." \*

Palmerin of England, like its prototype, Amadis de Gaul, is supposed to have originated in Portugal. Mr. Southey, indeed, confidently attributes it to the pen of Francis de Moraes ; an ascription which is in direct opposition to the authority of Cervantes, who asserts it to have been written by a King of Portugal. It has shared the like fate, too, in this country, with regard to its translator ; Anthony Munday having been the first to usher Palmerin, as well as Amadis, to an English public ; in fact, though in its original garb it appeared a century and a half later than the romance of Lobeira, it claims priority with regard to its English dress, having been licensed to Charlewood, and printed in 1580.

The multiplicity and rapid succession of extraordinary events in Palmerin of England, are such as to distract the most steady attention, and if it really deserved the encomium which the curate bestowed upon it in comparison with the rest of the worthy knight's library, little surprise can be excited at the mental hallucinations which the study of such a collection might ultimately produce.

Of the versions of honest Anthony, one of the most indefatigable translators of romance in the reign of Elizabeth, not much can be

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\* Jervis's Don Quixote, vol. i. chap.

said, either in point of style or fidelity. Labouring for those who possessed an eager and indiscriminating appetite for the marvellous, he was not greatly solicitous about the preservation of the manners and costume of his original, but rather strove to accommodate his authors to the taste of the majority of his readers. To enumerate the various romances which he attempted to naturalise, would be tedious and unprofitable; the two that we have already noticed, together with "Palmerin D'Oлива," and "The honorable, pleasant, and rare conceited Historie of Palmendo \*," were among the most popular, and will be sufficient to impart an idea of what, among the peninsular works of fiction, were most in vogue, when romances were as much read as novels are in the present age.

The last species of romance, which we shall notice as fashionable in Elizabeth's reign, may be termed the *Pastoral*. Of this class the most celebrated specimen that we can mention, is the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney, a book well known to Shakspeare, which continued highly popular for near a century, and reached an eighth edition as early as 1633, independent of impressions in Scotland, of which one occurs before the year 1600. †

The *Arcadia* appears to have been commenced by its author for the sole amusement of himself and his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, during his residence at Wilton, in 1580, and though prosecuted at various periods was left incomplete at his death in 1586. The affection of the Countess, however, to whose care and protection the scattered manuscripts had been assigned, induced her to publish an impression of it in the year 1590, revised under her own immediate

\* The first edition of Palmerin D'Oлива, translated by Anthony Munday, was published by Charlewood in 1588. Vide Bibliotheca Reediana, No. 2665; and his version of Palmendos, was printed by J. C. for Simon Watersonne (1589), 4to. bl. l.

† In a letter from Mr. Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, dated September 1599, it is said, that "the *Arcadia* is now printed in Scotland, according to the best edition, which will make them good cheap, but is very hurtful to Ponsonbie, who held them at a very high rate: he must sell as others doe, or they will lye upon his hands."—Vide Zouch's Memoirs of Sir Philip Sidney, p. 361.



direction; since which period fourteen editions have borne testimony to the merits of the work, and to the correctness of the editor's judgment.

To the publication of this far-famed romance, which is in many respects truly beautiful, and in every respect highly moral, we may attribute an important revolution in the annals of fictitious writing. It appears to have been suggested to the mind of Sir Philip, by two models of very different ages, and to have been built, in fact, on their admixture; these are the *Ethiopic History of Heliodorus*, Bishop of Tricca, in Thessaly, and the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro, productions as widely separated as the fourth and the sixteenth centuries. Their connection, however, will be more readily explained, when we recollect, that a translation of Heliodorus into English had been published only three years before the commencement of Sidney's *Arcadia*. This was the work of Thomas Underdowne, who printed a version of the ten entire books in 1577, dedicating them to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.\* That the *English Heliodorus* was chiefly instrumental in giving this peculiar direction to the genius of Sidney, was the opinion of Warton; but we must likewise recollect, that the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro, with which Sir Philip, as an excellent Italian scholar, must have been well acquainted†, presented him with the model for his shepherds, for their costume, diction, and sentiment, and that, like the English work, it is a mingled composition of poetry and prose.

Dismissing many of the paraphernalia of the ancient chivalric romance, its magicians, enchanted castles, dragons, and giants, but retaining its high-toned spirit of gallantry, heroism, and courtesy, combined with the utmost purity in morals, and with all the traditionary simplicity and innocence of rural life, the pastoral romance of Sidney exhibited a species of composition more reconcilable to probability.

\* A second edition of Underdowne's *Heliodorus* was printed in 1587, and a third in 1605.

† A complete edition of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* appeared in 1505.

than the adventures of Arthur and Amadis, but less natural and familiar than the tales of the Italians. In these last, however, virtue and decency are too often sacrificed at the shrine of licentiousness, whilst in the Arcadia of our countryman not a sentiment occurs which can excite a blush on the cheek of the most delicate modesty. To this moral tendency of Sidney's fictions, the muse of Cowper has borne testimony in the following pleasing lines : —

“ Would I had fall'n upon those happier days,  
That poets celebrate ; those golden times,  
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,  
And *Sidney*, warbler of poetic prose.  
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts,  
That felt their virtues : innocence, it seems,  
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves ;  
The footsteps of simplicity, impress'd  
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)  
Then were not all effac'd : then speech profane,  
And manners profligate, were rarely found ;  
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.” \*

Had the disciples of Sir Philip adhered to the model which he constructed ; had they, rejecting merely his unfortunate attempt to introduce the Roman metres into modern poetry, preserved his strength and animation in description, his beauty and propriety of sentiment, his variety and discrimination of character, the school of Sidney might have existed at the present hour. On the contrary, whatever was objectionable and overstrained in their prototype, they found out the art to aggravate ; and by a monstrous and monotonous overcharge of character, by a bloated tenuity of style, by a vein of sentiment so quaintly exalted as to have nothing of human sympathy about it, and by an indefinite prolixity of fable, they contrived to outrage nature nearly as much as had been effected by the wonders of necromancy and the achievements of chivalry ; and this, too, without producing a scintillation of those splendid traits of fancy which

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\* Task, book iv.



illumine, and even atone for, the wild fictions of the Anglo-Norman romance. The *Astrea* of D'Urfé, written about twenty years after Sidney's work, though sufficiently tedious, and frequently unnatural, makes the nearest approach to the pastoral beauty of the *Arcadia*; but what longevity can attach to, or what patience shall endure, the numerous and prodigious tomes of Madame Scuderi?\*

The shades of oblivion seem gathering fast even over the beautiful reveries of Sidney, a fate most undoubtedly hastened by the prolix and perverted labours of his successors; and what was the fashion and delight of the seventeenth century has generally ceased to charm. So great, indeed, was once the popularity of the *Arcadia*, that its effects became an object of consideration to the satirist and the historian. In 1631, we find the former thus admonishing the ladies:—"Insteade of songes and musicke let them learn cookerie and launderie. And instead of reading *Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia*, let them reade the groundes of good huswifery."† But the grave annalist and antiquary, Fuller, has, with more good sense, vindicated the study of this moral romance:—"I confess," says he, "I have heard some of modern pretended wits cavil at the *Arcadia*, because they made it not themselves: such who say that his book is the occasion that many precious hours are otherwise spent no better, must acknowledge it also the cause that many idle hours are otherwise spent no worse than in reading thereof."‡ There is no work, in short, in the department of *prose-fiction* which contains more apothegmatic wisdom than the *Arcadia* of Sidney; and it is to be regretted that the volume which had charmed a Shakspeare, a Milton, and a Waller §,

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\* Among the bulky romances of this prolific lady, who died June 2. 1701, aged 94, it may be worth while to enumerate a few, merely as instances of her uncommon fecundity, viz. *Artamene, ou le Grand Cyrus*, 10 vols. 8vo.; *Clelie*, 10 vols. 8vo.; *Almahide ou l'Esclave Reine*, 8 vols. 8vo.; *Ibrahim ou l'Illustre Bassa*, 4 vols. 8vo.

† *Tom of All Trades, or the plaine Pathway to Preferment, &c.* By Thomas Powell. Lond. 1631. 4to. pp. 47, 48. —Vide Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 425, and 426.

‡ Fuller's *Worthies*, 1662, part ii. p. 75.

§ See his *Verses on Saccharissa, the Lady Dorothy Sidney*.



and which has been praised by Temple\*, by Heylin†, and by Cowper, should be suffered, in any deference to the opinion of Lord Orford‡, to slumber on the shelf.

It is with pleasure, however, that we find a very modern critic not only passing a just and animated eulogium on the *Arcadia*, but asserting on his own personal knowledge, that, even in the general classes of society, it has still its readers and admirers. "Nobody, it has been said, reads the *Arcadia*. We have known very many persons who have read it, men, women, and children, and never knew one who read it without deep interest and admiration at the genius of the writer, great in proportion as they were capable of appreciating it. The verses are very bad, not that he was a bad poet, (on the contrary, much of his poetry is of high merit,) but because he was then versifying upon an impracticable system. Let the reader pass over all the eclogues, as dull interludes unconnected with the drama, and if he do not delight in the story itself, in the skill with which the incidents are woven together and unravelled, and in the Shakespearean power and character of language, with which they are painted; let him be assured the fault is in himself and not in the book." §

After this brief survey of the state of romantic literature, and of the various romances which were most popular, in the days of Shakespeare, it will be a proper appendage, if we add a few observations on the yet lingering relics of chivalric costume. That gorgeous spectacle, the Tournament, in which numerous knights engaged together

\* In his *Essay on Poetry*.

† In his *Description of Arcadia in Greece*, where he tells us that the *Arcadia*, "besides its excellent language, rare contrivances, and delectable stories, hath in it all the strains of poesy, comprehendeth the universal art of speaking, and to them who can discern and will observe, affordeth notable rules for demeanor both private and public."

‡ Park's edition of *Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. ii. p. 221. An excellent defence of the *Arcadia* against the decision of Lord Orford, who terms it "a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance," may be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1767, p. 57. See also Sir Egerton Brydges's edition of Phillip's *Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 134, et seq., and Zouch's *Memoirs of Sidney*, p. 155.

§ Aikin's *Annual Review*, vol. iv. p. 547.



on either side, fighting with the sword and truncheon, was latterly superseded by the joust or tilting-match, consisting of a succession of combats between two knights at one time, and in which the spear was the only weapon used. The dexterous management of this military amusement depended upon striking the front of the opponent's helmet, in such a manner as either to beat him backward from his horse, or break the spear in the contest. Jousting or tilting, which was usually celebrated in honour of the ladies, by whom the prizes were always awarded and distributed, continued to be a favourite diversion with Elizabeth to the close of her reign; she was attached to the gallantry which constituted the soul of these games, and to the splendour which accompanied their exhibition, and her nobles were not backward in encouraging and gratifying her romantic taste. Of this a remarkable instance may be adduced, in the person of Sir Henry Lee, Knight of the Garter, who vowed that he would annually, while health and strength permitted, enter the tilt-yard as his sovereign's knight. The completion of this vow led to annual contentions in the lists, and twenty-five personages of the first rank, among whom are to be found Lord Leicester, Sir Christopher Hatton, &c. agreed to establish a society of arms for this purpose. The presidency of the association was resigned by Sir Henry, on the plea of infirmity, in 1590, when he formally invested the Earl of Cumberland with his dignity, one of the most envied at that time, in the court of Elizabeth. \*

It was usual at these chivalric exhibitions, which ceased on the demise of their regal patroness, for the combatants, and even the men of fashion who attended as spectators, to wear a lady's favour on their arm; and when a knight had tilted with peculiar grace and spirit, the ladies were wont to fling a scarf or glove upon him as he passed; a custom which Shakspeare has attributed, as is frequent

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\* Pennant's London, p. 103.



with him, to an age long anterior to chivalric usage, for he represents Coriolanus, on his way to the capitol, as thus honoured :

————— “The matrons flung their gloves,  
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchiefs,  
Upon him as he pass'd.” \*

It appears also, from a passage in the second part of *King Henry the Fourth*, that an oath derived from a singular observance in the days of chivalry, was common in the days of Shakspeare ; for Shallow, persuading Sir John Falstaff to remain with him as his visitor, exclaims, “By *cock and pye*, Sir, you shall not away to night † ;” an adjuration which Steevens and Ridley refer to a corruption of the sacred name, and to a service-book of the Romish church, called in this country, previous to the Reformation, *a pie* ; but Mr. Douce has, with more probability, advanced the origin to which we allude. “It will, no doubt, be recollected,” he observes, “that in the days of ancient chivalry it was the practice to make solemn vows or engagements for the performance of some considerable enterprize. This ceremony was usually performed during some grand feast or entertainment, at which a roasted peacock or pheasant, being served up by ladies in a dish of gold or silver, was thus presented to each knight, who then made the particular vow which he had chosen, with great solemnity. When this custom had fallen into disuse, the peacock nevertheless continued to be a favourite dish, and was introduced on the table in a *pie*, the head, with gilded beak, being proudly elevated above the crust, and the splendid tail expanded. Other birds of smaller value were introduced in the same manner, and the recollection of the old peacock vows might occasion the less serious, or even burlesque, imitation of swearing not only by the bird itself, but also by the *pie* ; and hence probably the oath *by cock and pie*.” ‡

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvi. p. 84., and Malone's note.

† Ibid. vol. xii. p. 213. Act v. sc. 1.

‡ Douce's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 472.



As all persons beneath the rank of an esquire were precluded, by the laws of chivalry, from taking any part in the celebration of justs and tournaments, while at the same time, a strong desire of *imitation* was excited in the public mind, by the attractive nature of these diversions, it soon became an object with the commonality to establish something which might bear a striking resemblance to the favourite amusements of their superiors. Hence the origin of tilting at the quintain, which we have already noticed in the chapter on Rural Diversions, and of tilting at the ring and on the water; sports, of which even the Queen herself condescended not unfrequently to be a spectator.

Tilting at the ring was considered as the most respectable of the three amusements, and was generally practised as a preparatory exercise to the knightly feat of jousting. The ring was suspended at a fixed height, in a sheath, by the contrivance of two springs, and the object of the tilter was, while riding at full speed, to thrust the point of his lance through the ring, drawing it, by the strength of his stroke, from its sheath, and bearing it away on the summit of his lance. In this pastime, the horses, as well as the men, required constant training and practice, and, on the day of contest, the palm of victory was adjudged to him who in three courses, for this number was allowed to each candidate, carried the point of his lance the oftenest through the ring.

Of these games the most vulgar, but the most productive of merriment, was that of tilting on the water, in which the combatants, standing in the centre of their respective boats, were armed with a lance and shield, and he was esteemed the conqueror, who, by a dexterous management of his weapon, contrived to strike his adversary in such a manner as to overturn him in the water, while he himself remained firm and stationary. With this curious exhibition it would appear that the Queen was highly gratified, on her visit to Sandwich, "where certain wallounds that could well swym, had prepared two boates, and in the middle of each boate was placed a borde, upon which borde there stood a man, and so they met toge-



ther, with either of them a staff and a shield of wood ; and one of them did overthrow another, at which the Queene had good sport.”\*

To jousting, and to tilting at the ring, some of the most remarkable relics of expiring chivalry, and of which the latter had attained to almost scientific precision at the commencement of the seventeenth century, Shakspeare has several allusions in the course of his dramas.† The most striking of these refers to an accident which not unfrequently occurred, when a knight, unable to manage his horse with due skill, suffered it to deviate sideways in its career, the consequence of which was, that instead of breaking his lance in a direct line against his adversary's helmet, it was broken *across* his breast, a circumstance deemed highly dishonourable, as the result either of timidity or want of dexterity:—“ O, that's a brave man !” says Celia, speaking of Orlando, in *As You Like It*, “ he writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover ; as a puny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose.” ‡

It was about this period too, the close of the sixteenth century, that another remnant of romantic usage became nearly extinct. We allude to the profession of the *Minstrel*, which, until the year 1597, had been cherished or tolerated in this country, from an era as ancient as the conquest.

During the reign of Elizabeth, indeed, the character of the *Minstrel*, combining the offices of the poet, the singer, and the musician, and that of the *Jestour*, or mere reciter of tales and gestes, gradually lost their importance and respectability, and were no longer protected by the noble and the opulent. On the accession of the Queen, however, and for about twenty years afterwards, instances may be adduced

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\* Nichols's Progresses, vol. i. p. 56., the year 1573.

† See Comedy of Errors, act iv. sc. 2. Henry IV. Part I. act ii. sc. 3. Romeo and Juliet, act iii. sc. 1. Love's Labour's Lost, act v. sc. 2. Taming of the Shrew, act i. sc. 1.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. pp. 124, 125. Act iii. sc. 4.



where the Minstrel appears to have acted in his genuine capacity, that is, as the sole depository of the poems which he chaunted, and not, as was subsequently the case, the fabricator of songs and ballads merely for the press. The latest specimens of what may be termed the old Minstrelsy, Dr. Percy assigns to the years 1569 and 1572, when the ballads entitled "*The Rising in the North*," and "*Northumberland betrayed by Douglas*," were produced.\* Between the Minstrel-ballads and those written merely for the press, a marked difference was usually perceptible, the former exhibiting greater rudeness of language, with a more northern cast in their structure; greater irregularity in metre, and incidents more romantic, wild, and chivalric; while the latter presented altogether a southern dialect, more correct versification, incidents, though occasionally pathetic, comparatively tame and insipid, and a costume more modern and familiar. Of this last kind, were the numerous ballads of the reign of James the First, frequently collected together, and published under the appellation of *Garlands*.

There is reason to suppose, notwithstanding the declining state of the minstrel tribe, that some attention was yet paid to their appearance and dress; that their ancient distinguishing costume was well known, and sometimes imitated, and that, especially in the prior half of the Elizabethan era, a peculiar garb was still attached to their office. We are warranted in these inferences by contemporary authority: Laneham, in his description of Elizabeth's entertainment at Killingworth Castle, in 1575, mentions his having been in company with a person who was to have performed the character of an *ancient Minstrel* before the Queen, "if meete time and place had been foound for it." This man, who was probably a member of the profession, entertained some worshipful friends, of which Laneham was one, with a representation of the part which he should have enacted at the Earl of Leicester's; and it is remarkable that this

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\* Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, vol. i. pp. liv. 285. 295.



assumed minstrel is styled, “ *a squire minstrel of Middilsex, that travaild the cuntree THYS soomer season unto fayrz and woorshipfull menz houzez*; a strong proof that the character, in all its full costume, was not considered as sufficiently bizarre and obsolete to render such an assertion improbable. “ A person very meete seemed he for the purpose; (we here drop the author’s absurd orthography;) of a XLV years old, apparelled partly as he would himself. His cap off, his head seemly rounded tonster-wise; fair kembered, that with a sponge daintily dipt in a little capon’s grease, was finely smoothed to make it shine like a mallard’s wing; his beard smugly shaven; and yet his shirt after the new trink, with ruffs fair-starched, sleeked, and glistening like a pair of new shoes: marshalled in good order: with a stetting stick, and stout that every ruff stood up like a wafer. A side gown of Kendal green, after the freshness of the year now; gathered at the neck with a narrow gorget, fastened afore with a white clasp and a keeper close up to the chin, but easily for heat to undo when he list: seemly begirt in a red caddis girdle; from that a pair of capped Sheffield knives hanging a to side (one on each side): out of his bosom drawn forth a lappet of his napkin, edged with a blue lace, and marked with a true love, a heart, and a D. for *Damian*; for he was but a batchelor yet.

“ His gown had side sleeves down to midleg, slit from the shoulder to the hand, and lined with white cotton. His doublet-sleeves of black worsted: upon them a pair of poynets of tawny chamblet, laced along the wrist with blue threaden joints; a wealt toward the hand of fustian anapes: a pair of red neather stocks: a pair of pumps on his feet, with a cross cut at the toes for cornes; not new, indeed, yet cleanly blacked with soot, and shining as a shoeing horn. About his neck, a red ribband suitable to his girdle: his harp in good grace dependent before him: his wrest\* tied to a green lace, and hanging by. Under the gorget of his gown a fair flagon chain of pewter (for

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\* *Wrest*—the key with which the harp is tuned.



silver); as a *squire minstrel* of Middlesex, that travelled the country this summer season, unto fairs and worshipful mens houses. From his chain hung a scutcheon, with metal and colour, resplendent upon his breast, of the ancient arms of Islington. — After three lowly courtesies, ‘he’ cleared his voice with a hem and reach, and spat out withal; wiped his lips with the hollow of his hand for fling his napkin, tempered a string or two with his wrest, and after a little warbling on his harp for a prelude, came forth with a solemn song, warranted for story out of *King Arthur’s acts*.” \*

In 1592, Henry Chettle, describing *Anthony Now-Now*, an aged and celebrated minstrel of his own time, represents him as “an od old fellow; low of stature, his head covered with a *round cap*, his body with a *tawney coate*, his legs and feete truste uppe in *leather buskins*, his gray haire and furrowed face witnessed his age, his *treble viol* in his hande †;” from which it would appear that even to the last the members of this tuneful tribe were distinguished by some peculiarity of dress.

In the mean time, however, they were becoming, through the dissoluteness of their manners, obnoxious to government, and contemptible in the public estimation. Stubbes, in the first edition of his *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583, terms them a parcel of drunken sockets, and bawdy parasites, that “raunge the countries,” he observes, “riming and singing of unclean, corrupt, and filthy songs in tavernes, ale-houses, innes, and other publike assemblies. — There is no ship,” he exclaims, “so laden with merchandize, as their heads are pestred with al kinds of bawdy songs, filthy ballades, and scurvy rymes, serving for every purpose, and for every company. For proof whereof,” he subjoins, “who bee baudier knaves than they? who uncleaner than they? who more licentious, and looser minded than they? and brieflie, who more inclined to all kind of insolency and leudness than they? — I think that al good minstrels, sober and chaste musitions, may dance the wild Moris through a needles eye.”

\* Nichols’s *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i.

† *Kind Harts Dreame*, sig. B. 2.

He subsequently adds that, notwithstanding their immorality, "every toune, citie, and countrey, is full of these minstrelles to pipe up a daunce to the devill."

That this description is not much exaggerated by the puritanical severity of its author, is evident from the language of Puttenham, a courtier and polite writer, who calls this degraded race "*cantabanqui*," singers "upon benches and barrells heads—minstrels that give a fit of mirth for a groat—in taverns and ale-houses, and such other places of base resort \*;" a picture corroborated by the authority of Bishop Hall, who a few years afterwards, speaking of the exhilarating effect of his own satirical poetry, says it is

" Much better than a Paris-garden beare,  
Or prating poppet on a theater,  
Or *Mimce's* whistling to his tabouret,  
Selling a laughter for a cold meal's meat." †

The character which Shakspeare attributes to the minstrel race of this period, is in accordance with the preceding passages. In the original edition of his *Rape of Lucrece*, which appeared in 1594, he draws his heroine exclaiming,

" *Feast-finding* minstrels, tuning my defame,  
Will tie the hearers to attend each line." ‡

The epithet in *Italics* very distinctly points out the vagrant life of these attendants on merriment and good cheer. They were accustomed to travel the country, in search of bride-ales, Christmas dinners, fairs, &c., and wherever they could get access to the halls of the gentry and nobility.

It is in the *Winter's Tale*, however, that the minstrel of our poet's age is but too faithfully depicted. In the person of Autolycus, whom

\* *Arte of English Poesie*, reprint, p. 69.

† Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. v. p. 273. col. 1. Book iv. sat. 1.

‡ Malone's *Supplement to Shakspeare's Plays*, vol. i. p. 521.



we have already noticed, when describing the country wake, is to be found, in colours faithful to nature, the very object of Stubbe's satire, a composition very curiously blending the various functions of the minstrel, the pedlar, and the rogue.

No harshness therefore can be attributed to the act of Queen Elizabeth, which in 1597 nearly annihilated an occupation so vilely associated and degraded. In the fourth chapter of this statute the law enacts that "all fencers, bearwards, common players of enterludes, and MINSTRELLS, wandering abroad; all juglers, tinkers, pedlars, &c. shall be adjudged and deemed *rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggers*;" a clause which, very deservedly, put an end to a profession which, though once highly respectable and interesting, no longer had a claim to public support; a clause which enabled Dr. Bull to say, with much truth,

"Beggars they are with one consent,  
And Rogues, by Act of Parliament." \*

Of the use which Shakspeare made of the various romances, tales, and ballads which undoubtedly occupied a large portion of his library, an accurate estimate may be formed from a close inspection of his dramas. It will be found, that, with the exception of the Historical plays, derived either from English chronicles or translations of classic story, the residue of his dramatic productions may be traced to sources exclusively existing within the regions of romantic literature. As we shall have occasion, however, hereafter to notice the origin of each drama, as it passes before us in chronological succession, it will merely be necessary in this place, in order to afford some proof of his familiarity with these fictions, to select a few specimens of his allusion to them from the body of his plays.

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\* See Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romanceës*, vol. i. *Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy*, p. ccxxiv.

That our poet was well acquainted with the celebrated Romance, entitled *Mort d'Arthure*, the most popular of its class, would have been readily admitted from the known course of his studies, even if he had not once alluded to it in the course of his works. In the *Second Part*, however, of *King Henry the Fourth*, he makes *Shallow*, vaunting of his youthful feats to Falstaffe, say, "I was then *Sir Dagonet* in *Arthur's show*\*;" a line upon which Mr. Douce observes, "Whatever part *Sir Dagonet* took in this show would doubtless be borrowed from Mallory's romance of the *Mort Arture*, which had been compiled in the reign of Henry VII. What there occurs relating to *Sir Dagonet* was extracted from the excellent and ancient story of *Tristan de Leonnois*, in which *Dagonet* is represented as the fool of king *Arthur* †;" a character certainly well adapted to the powers of the worthy justice.

It should, however, be remarked, that the *Arthur's show* in this passage was not, what it might at first be supposed, an exact representation of the ancient chivalric costume of that romantic Prince and his knights, but principally an exhibition of *Archery* by a toxophilite society, of which Richard Robinson, the translator of the English Gesta, has given us an account under the title of "*The Auncient Order Societie, and Unitie Laudable, of Prince Arthure and his knightly Armory of the Round Table. With a Threefold Assertion friendly in favour and furtherance of English Archery at this day.*" 1583. 4to. ‡

These city-worthies, to the number of fifty-eight, it would seem, had for some time assumed the arms and the names of the knights of the Round Table, and Robinson, who the year before had published a translation of Leland's *Assertio Arthvrii*, thought proper to dedicate his *Ancient Order* to M. Thomas Smith, Esq., the then Prince Arthur of this fellowship, and compliments him by deducing his society

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 144. Act iii. sc. 2.

† Douce's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 465.

‡ British Bibliographer, No. II. p. 125.



from the establishment of the round table in the reign of Edward the First. "But touching your famous order and fellowship of knights in shooting, though in K. E. I. his time (ann. 1279) a valiant Knight and manly Mortimer at Kenelworth appointed a knightly game, which was called the Round Table of 100 knights and so manie Ladies (nameth not expressly shooting to be one) yet for exercise of armes thither came many warlike knightes of divers kingdomes. And the most famous and victorious king E. 3. builded at Winchester (ann. 1344) an house called the Round Table of an exceeding compasse, to the exercise of like or farre greater Chevalry therin:— So the most famous, prudent, politike and grave prince K. Henry the 7 was the first Phenix in chusing out a number of chiefe Archers to give daily attendance upon his person, whom he named his Garde. But the high and mighty renowned prince his son, K. H. 8. (ann. 1509) not onely with great prowes and praise proceeded in that which his father had begon; but also added greater dignity unto the same, like a most roial renowned David, enacting a good and godly statute (ann. 33. H. 8. cap. 9.) for the use and exercise of shooting in every degree. And furthermore for the maintenance of the same laudable exercise in this honourable city of London by his gracious charter confirmed unto the worshipful citizens of the same, this your now famous order of Knights of Prince Arthures Round Table or Society: like as in his life time when he sawe a good Archer indeede, he chose him and ordained such a one for a knight of the same order." \*

As this "*friendly and franke fellowship* of Prince Arthur's Knightes," as Mulcaster terms it in his Positions †, bore little resemblance to its celebrated archetype in any point of chivalric observance, beyond the name; and as archery had ceased to be an object with government in a military light, and was considered indeed, in

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\* British Bibliographer, No. II. p. 126, 127.

† *Positions concerning the training up of Children*, London, 1581 and 1587. 4to. chap. xxvi.

the reign of James I., as a mere pastime, the society, though respectable in the days of Robinson and Mulcaster, soon dwindled into contempt, an idle mockery of an institution which had originally been great and imposing.

IN MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, our author very distinctly refers to another of Captain Cox's romances, *Huon of Bourdeaux*, a production of equal popularity with *Morte Arthure*, and which was translated into English by Lord Berners, in the reign of Henry the Eighth \*, under the title of *Sir Hugh of Bourdeaux*. Benedict being informed of the approach of Beatrice, addresses Don Pedro in the following terms:—"Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; *fetch you a hair of the great Cham's beard*; do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three word's conference with this harpy." † The passage in Italics, together with the spirit of the context, will be discovered in the subsequent command and achievement.

"Thou must goe to the citie of Babylon to the Admiral Gaudisse, to bring me thy hand full of the heare of his beard, and foure of his greatest teeth. Alas, my lord, (quoth the Barrons,) we see well you desire greatly his death, when you charge him with such a message." ‡

"He opened his mouth, and tooke out his foure great teeth, and then cut off his beard, and tooke thereof as much as pleased him." §

\* The original, the *Histoire de Huon de Bordeaux*, was ushered into the world at the Fair of Troyes in Champagne, in the first century of printing.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 51. Act ii. sc. 1.

‡ Huon of Bourdeaux, chap. xvii.

§ Chap. xlvi. edit. of 1601. Lord Berners's translation underwent three editions. The original has had the honour of giving birth to the *Chef d'Oeuvre of Wieland*—"the child of his genius," observe the Monthly Reviewers, "in moments of its purest converse with the all-beauteous forms of ideal excellence;—the darling of his fancy, born in the sweetest



This version of Lord Berners furnished Shakspeare with the name, though not with the character, of *Oberon*.

THE SECOND PART OF KING HENRY THE SIXTH supplies us with a reference to the ancient romance of *Sir Bevis of Southampton*. In the combat between Horner and his servant Peter, the former exclaims — “Peter, have at thee with a downright blow, *as Bevis of Southampton fell upon Ascapart*.” \*

This romance, which forms the fourth article in the Coventry Library, was once highly popular, though possessing little merit. It was printed by Pynson, and issued twice from the press of Copland, and once from that of East. It has been since frequently republished, in various forms, for the amusement of the juvenile part of the community.

Of the hero of the tale, Selden has left us the following notice in his notes on the *Polyolbion*: — “About the Norman invasion was Bevis famous with the title of Earl of Southampton; Duncton in Wiltshire known for his residence. — His sword is kept as a relique in Arundel Castle; not equalling in length (as it is now worn) that of Edward 3, at Westminster.” †

Shakspeare has done further honour to this legend, by putting two lines of it into the mouth of Edgar. Bevis, being confined in a dungeon, was allowed neither meat nor corn, but

“ Rattes and myce and such smal dere  
Was his meate that seven yere;”

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of her excursions amid the ambrosial bowers of fairy-land; — the *OBERON*, — an epic poem, popular beyond example, yet as dear to the philosopher as to the multitude; which, during the author's lifetime, has attained in its native country all the honours of a sacred book; and to the evolution of the beauties of which, a Professor in a distinguished university has repeatedly consecrated an entire course of patronized lectures.” New Series, vol. xxiii. p. 576.

The beauties of *Oberon* are now accessible to the mere English scholar, through the medium of Mr. Sotheby's version, which, though strictly faithful to the German, has the spirit and harmony of an original poem.

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xiii. p. 249. Act ii. sc. 3.

† Chalmers's English Poets, vol. iv. p. 189. col. 1. — *Polyolbion*, canto ii.

a distich which the supposed madman in *Lear* has thus, almost verbally, adopted : --

“ But mice, and rats, and such small deer,  
Have been Tom’s food for seven long year.” \*

Dr. Percy has observed that Shakspeare had doubtless often heard this metrical romance sung to the harp †; the popularity of these legends, indeed, was such that, towards the end of Elizabeth’s reign, most of them were converted into prose, a degradation which befel Sir Bevis, Sir Guy of Warwick, and many others of equal celebrity. To this last romance Shakspeare has an allusion in his *King John*, where the bastard speaks of

“ Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man,” ‡

the defeat of this Danish Goliath, in single combat, by Sir Guy, being one of the leading features of the story.

It is highly probable, that the achievement ascribed to King Richard, in this play, of tearing out the lion’s heart §, was immediately derived from a copy of the old metrical romance in the poet’s library. It is true that the chronicles of Fabian and Rastall have detailed this fiction, and there is no doubt, from the same authority; but the metrical legend of Richard Cœur de Lion being one of the most popular of the Anglo-Norman romances, and having been thrice printed, twice by W. De Worde, and once by Will. Copland, there is much reason to conclude that an acknowledged lover, and collector, of this branch of literature would prefer taking his imagery from the poem itself, more especially if it rested upon his shelves.

It appears from this romance, that Richard not only tore out the heart of the lion, but, dipping it in salt, eat it before the eyes of the

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 475. Act iii. sc. 4.

† Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, vol. iii. p. xxiii.

‡ Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. x. p. 363. Act i. sc. 1.

§ Ibid. p. 367. *King John*, act i. sc. 1.



astonished king of Almain, a feat which instantly drew from His Majesty the peculiar appellation which designates the tale : —

“ Yevis, as I understand can,  
This is a devil, and no man,  
That has my strong lion y-slawe,  
The heart out of his body drawe,  
And has it eaten with good will !  
He may be called, by right skill,  
King y-christened of most renown,  
Strong *Richard Cœur de Lion* ! ” \*

The play of *Henry the Fifth* furnishes a reference to the fifth article in Laneham's catalogue of the Coxean collection. Fluellen compelling Pistol to eat his leek, tells him, — “ You called me yesterday, mountain-squire ; but I will make you to-day a *squire of low degree*. ” †

This romance, which was licensed to John Kynge on the tenth of June 1560‡, and printed by William Copland before 1570§, was one of the most popular of the sixteenth century, and possesses some striking traits of manners, and several very curious poetical sketches. It is twice alluded to by Spenser ¶ in his *Faerie Queene*, and has been supposed, though probably without sufficient foundation, to have existed in manuscript anterior to the age of Chaucer. ¶

There are some scenes in Shakspeare which appear to have been originally derived from *Oriental* fable. Thus, in *Twelfth Night*, the leading ideas of Malvolio's soliloquy (act ii. sc. 5.), bear a strong re-

\* Vide Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, vol. ii. p. 201., and Weber's *Metrical Romances*, vol. i.

† Reed's *Shakspeare*, vol. xii. p. 502. Act v. sc. 1.

‡ Ritson's *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romancees*, vol. iii. p. 344.

§ Vide Garrick Collection in Beloe's *Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 400.

¶ Todd's *Spenser*, vol. v. p. 313. 367.

¶ This poet is conjectured to have thrown some ridicule on the *Squire of Low Degree*, in his rhyme of *Sir Thopas* ; but Ritson remarks, that this romance “ is never mentioned by any one writer before the sixteenth century ; nor is it known to be extant in manuscript ; and, in fact, the Museum copy is the onely one that exists in print. ” *Romancees*, vol. iii. p. 345.

semblance, as Mr. Tyrrwhitt observes, to those of Alnaschar, in *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*; an observation which has drawn from Mr. Steevens the following curious and pertinent note:—

“ Many Arabian fictions had found their way into obscure Latin and French books, and from thence into English ones, long before any professed version of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* had appeared. I meet with a story similar to that of Alnaschar, in *The Dialogue of Creatures Moralyed*, bl. l. no date, but probably printed abroad: ‘ It is but foly to hope to moche of vanyteys. Whereof it is told in fablis that a lady uppon a tyme delyuered to her mayden a galon of mylke to sell at a cite. And by the waye as she sate and restid her by a dyche side, she began to thinke y<sup>r</sup> with ye money of the mylke she wolde bye an henne, the which shulde bring forth chekyns, and when they were grownyn to hennys she wolde sell them and by piggis, and eschaunge them into shepe, and the shepe into oxen; and so whan she was come to richnesse she sholde be married right worshipfully unto some worthy man, and thus she rejoycid. And when she was thus marvelously comfortid, and ravished inwardely in her secrete solace thinkynge with howe great joye she shuld be ledde toward the church with her husbond on horsebacke, she sayde to her self, Goo wee, goo wee, sodaynelye she smote the grounde with her fote, myndynge to spurre the horse; but her fote slypped and she fell in the dyche, and there laye all her mylke; and so she was farre from her purpose, and never had that she hopid to have. Dial. 100, LL. ij b.” \*

We may also refer the *Induction* to the *Taming of the Shrew* to the same source, to *The Sleeper awakened*, in the *Arabian Nights*, a tale which seems to have crept from its oriental fountain through every modern European language. Its earliest appearance in English that can now be traced, is derived from the information of Mr. Warton, who informs us that his friend Mr. Collins, the celebrated lyric poet, had in his

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 326. note.



possession a collection of short comic stories in prose, "sett forth by maister Richard Edwards, mayster of her Majesties revels," and with the date of 1570. This book, which was printed in the black letter, contained the story of the *Induction*, and was, there is little doubt, the source whence Shakspeare and the author of the elder *Taming of the Shrew* drew their outline.\* A similar tale is the subject of a ballad in the Pepysian collection, which has been published by Percy †, and it is to be found also in Sir Richard Barckley's *Discourse on the Felicitie of Man*, 1598, in Goulart's *Admirable and Memorable Histories*, translated by E. Grimstone, 1607; in Burton's *Anatomie of Melancholy*, 1615; in *The Apothegms of King James, King Charles, the Marquis of Worcester, &c.* 1658, and in Winstanley's *Historical Rarities*, 1684. ‡ Some of the Arabian Tales and some of the Fables of Pilpay may be traced in *The Seven Wise Masters*, and in the English *Gesta Romanorum*.

To romances of *Italian* origin and structure, such as were exhibited in English versions often mutilated and incorrect, our author's obligations are so numerous, particularly with regard to the formation of plot, that, referring to a future consideration of each play for further illustration on these subjects, we shall only remark in this place, that many of the faults which have been ascribed to Shakspeare's want of judgment in the conduct of his dramas, are attributable to the necessity he was under, either from want of power or want of time, of applying to versions and imitations in lieu of the originals; a species of accommodation which frequently led him to adopt the mistakes of a wretched translation, when a reference to the Italian would immediately have induced a better choice. This will account for many of the charges which Mrs. Lennox has brought against the poet, in respect to deficiency of skill in the arrangement of his incidents. §

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 5., and Warton's Hist. of Poetry, vol. iii. p. 294.

† Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, vol. i. p. 254.

‡ See Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. pp. 201, 202., and Douce's Illustrations, vol. i. p. 342.

§ See *Shakspeare Illustrated*, by Mrs. Lennox, 3 vols. 12mo. 1754.

The *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* presents us with an allusion to one of those *Spanish* romances which became so popular towards the close of Elizabeth's reign. Falstaff, in answer to the Prince, who had told him, that he saw no reason why he should "be so superfluous to demand the time of the day," replies, "Indeed, you come near me now, Hal: for we, that take purses, go by the moon and seven stars; and not by Phœbus,—he, *that wandering knight so fair*."\*

The romance to which this passage stands indebted, is entitled, in the best and most complete edition, "*Espejo de Principes, y Cavaleros. En el qual se cuentan los immortales hechos de CAVALLERO DEL FEBO, &c. &c.*, four parts, folio, and is the subject of the Barber's eulogium in *Don Quixote*. "He (the Don) had frequent disputes with the priest of his village, who was a learned person, and had taken his degrees in Ciguenza, which of the two was the better knight, Palmerin of England, or Amadis de Gaul. But master Nicholas, barber-surgeon of the same town, affirmed, that none ever came up to the *Knight of the Sun*."†

This production, the first part of which was translated into English, under the title of *The Myrrour of Knighthood*, was well known in Shakspeare's time; the second part of the first book having been printed in the black letter, by Thomas Este, in 1585.‡ The whole occupies three volumes in 4to., and in it the Knight of the Sun is represented not only as "most excellently *faire*," but as a prodigious *wanderer*; so that Falstaff, who, by an easy association, digresses from Phœbus to this solar knight-errant, has very compendiously combined his characteristics.

It is probable that the celebrated passage in *Hamlet's* soliloquy, where the prince speaks of

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xi. p. 191. Act i. sc. 2.

† Jarvis's *Don Quixote*, vol. i. part i. chap. 1. Sharpe's edit. p. 3.

‡ Vide *Bibliotheca Reediana*, No. 2661.



"The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns," \*

may have been founded on a similar idea in the Spanish romance entitled *Palmerin d'Oliva*. The translation of Palmerin was first printed in 1588, and in Part II. chap. 3. the reader must be struck with the following words,—“before he took his journey wherein no creature returneth agaie.” Now, as Hamlet, according to the chronological arrangement of Mr. Malone, was not written until 1596, and Palmerin d'Oliva may certainly be reckoned among the most fashionable romances of its day, the conjecture is entitled to attention. It is necessary, however, to add, that we are altogether indebted for it to a learned and ingenious correspondent in the *British Bibliographer*, whose initial signature is W. and whose acquaintance with romantic lore appears to be equally accurate and profound. †

To this gentleman we are under further obligation for the confirmation of a supposition made by Mr. Douce, who, commenting on this part of Hamlet's soliloquy, refers it to a passage in the *History of Valentine and Orson*, and adds,—“It is probable that there was an edition of Valentine and Orson in Shakspeare's time, though none such is supposed now to remain.” ‡

Such an edition, it appears, is in the possession of the correspondent of Sir Egerton Brydges, who has given us a description of it, together with the following title, as drawn from the colophon:—*“The historie of the two valyante brethren Valentyne and Orson, sônes vn to the Emperour of Grace. Imprinted at London over a gaynst St. Margaretes Church in Lothbery be William Coplande.”* Small

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 173. Act iii. sc. 1.

† *British Bibliographer*, No. II. p. 148.

‡ Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. ii. p. 240. — Mr. Douce observes, that the “oldest (edition) we know of is that of 1649, printed by Robert Ibbitson. In 1586, *The old book of Valentine and Orson* was licensed to T. Purfoot.” P. 240.

4to. b. l. sig. I. i. 5. wood-cuts.\* The antiquity of this copy, though without date, is ascertained by the circumstance, that Will. Copland, the printer, died between the years 1568 and 1569; and there is even reason to suppose, that this is but a re-impression, for, after the table of contents, a short note states, "Here endeth the table *newly correcte*."†

The reference of Mr. Douce is to page 63 of the edition of 1694, in which occurs a sentence which undoubtedly bears a striking resemblance to the lines of Shakspeare:—"I shall send some of you here present *into such a country, that you shall scarcely ever return again to bring tydings of your valour*."‡

That our great poet was as well versed in the pages of Valentine and Orson, as have been the school-boys of this country for the last century, is our firm belief. "It would be difficult," says the possessor of Copland's edition, "to find a reader of the present day, who had not in the hour of childhood voted a portion of his scanty stipend to the purchase of 'Valentine and Orson,' and withdrawn for a few hours from more laborious exercises, or amusements, to peruse its fascinating pages;" and equally difficult would it have been, in Shakspeare's days, to have found a person of liberal education, who had not devoted a portion of his leisure to the perusal of this simple but energetic romance.

From the numerous corresponding passages, however, cited by our author's commentators, from the period of Catullus to the seventeenth century, it would seem that the idea, and even the terms in which it has been expressed, may be considered as a kind of common property, and consequently rather a mark of coincidence than imitation.

Of the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney, the best *pastoral* romance, and one of the most popular books of its age, we cannot be surprised that Shakspeare should have been an ardent admirer, and that occa-

\* British Bibliographer, No. V. p. 469.

† Ibid. p. 470.

‡ Douce's Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 240.



sionally he should have been indebted to it for an incident or an image. The first scene of the fourth act, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which Valentine accepts the captainship of a band of outlaws, appears to be founded on that part of the *Arcadia* where Pyrocles, released from prison by the Helots, consents to be their leader and captain. \*

More certainly is the episode of Gloster and his sons, in *King Lear*, derived from the same work, the first edition of which, published in 1590, being divided into chapters, exhibits one with this title:—"The pitifull state and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde king, and his kinde sonne: first related by the sonne, then by the blind father." The subsequent editions omit the divisions into chapters, and in the copy before us, which is the seventh impression, the story commences at page 132, being part of the second book. As no other source for this narrative than the *Arcadia*, has hitherto been traced, and as the similarity of incident is considerable, there can be little doubt but that this portion of *King Lear* must confess its obligation to the romance.

The appellation, also, given to Cupid, in a passage in *Much Ado about Nothing*, is evidently to be referred to a line in the *Arcadia*. Don Pedro, speaking of Benedict, says, "he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little *hangman* dare not shoot at him." † It has been conjectured, that the word in Italics should be *hench-man*, a page or attendant; but to decide the question it is only necessary to quote the words of Sidney:—

"Millions of yeares this old drivell Cupid lives;  
While still more wretch, more wicked he doth prove:  
Till now at length that Jove him office gives,  
At Juno's suite, who much did Argus love,  
In this our world a *hangman* for to be  
Of all those fooles that will have all they see." ‡

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\* *Arcadia*, book i. p. 29. 7th edit.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 87. Act iii. sc. 2.

‡ Book ii. pp. 153, 154. edit. of 1629.

If, from this catalogue of allusions, our author's intimacy with the romances of his age, may be considered as proved, his familiarity with the *ballads* and *songs* of the same period will not be deemed less extensive, or less admitting of demonstration. Throughout his dramas, indeed, a peculiar partiality for these popular little pieces is very manifest; he delights to quote them, wherever he can find a place for their introduction, and his own efforts in this line of poetry are often of the utmost simplicity and beauty.

How strongly he felt this predilection for the strains of our elder minstrelsy, and how exquisitely he has expressed his attachment to them, must be in the recollection of all who have ever read, or seen performed, his admirable comedy of the *Twelfth Night*, in which the Duke exclaims, —

“ Give me some musick : — but that piece of song,  
That old and antique song we heard last night,  
Methought it did relieve my passion much;  
More than light airs and recollected terms,  
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times : —  
Mark it, Cæsario; it is old, and plain :  
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,  
And the free maids, that weave their thread with bones,  
Do use to chaunt it; it is silly sooth,  
And dallies with the innocence of love,  
Like the old age.” \*

Before we notice, however, the ballads which Shakspeare has quoted, or to which he has alluded, it will be satisfactory, if, to the articles specified in Captain Cox's “ Bunch of Ballets and Songs,” we add a few more of similar popularity, and from a source equally rare and authentic. In the *British Bibliographer*, Mr. Haslewood has given us a description of the fragment of a tract in his possession, entitled *THE WORLD'S FOLLY*, printed, as he concludes, from the type, before 1600, and from which, “ as every allusion,” he justly observes, “ to our early ballads is interesting,” he has obliged his

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. pp. 305. 307, 308. Act ii. sc. 4.



readers with some very curious quotations. "The author," he remarks, "appears to describe the purgatory of Folly. He wanders from room to room, and to each new character assigns a ballad, that may be presumed was distinguished for popularity. A man, whose credit had decayed by trusting servants, and had commenced botcher, 'had standing by him, for meate and drinke, a pot of strong ale, which was often at his nose, that it kept his face in so good a colour, and his braine in so kinde a heate, as forgetting part of his forepassed pride, in the good humour of grieving patience, made him with a hemming sigh, ilfavouredly singe the ballad of *Whilom I was*: to the tune of *Tom Tinker*.' An old man, shaking with palsy, who, 'having beene a man of some possessions, and with too fat feeding of horses, too high keeping of hawkes, and too much delighting in banquetinges, through lacke of husbandrie, was forced to leave himself without lande; . . . after many a deepe sighe, with a hollow voice, in a solemne tune, with a heavie heartell fell to sing the song of *Oken leaves began wither*: to the tune of *Heavilie, heavilie*.' A dapper fellow that in his youth had spent more than he got on his person, 'fell to singe the ballad of the *blinde beggar*: to the tune of *Heigh ho*.' The general lover, having no further credit with beauty, 'howled out the dittie of *When I was faire and young*: to the tune of *Fortune*. The next is whimsically described as 'one that was once a virgin, had beene a little while a mayde, knew the name of a wife, fell to be a widdow,' and finally a procuress; 'she would sing the *Lamentation of a sinner*: to the tune of *Welladaye*.' A decayed prostitute, who had become laundress to the house, 'stood singing the ballet of *All a greene willowe*: to the famous tune of *Ding Dong*.' A man with good personage, with a froward wife, 'hummed out the balled of the *breeches*: to the tune of *Never, never*.' His termagant spouse drew from her pocket 'a ballad of the *tinker's wife that beate her husbandle*.' To the last character in the fragment is also given Raleigh's ballad. He was 'one that had beene in love, sat looking on his mistresse picture, making such a legge to it, writing such verses in honour to it, and committing such idolatrie with it, that poore man, I pittied

him : and in his behalfe sorrowed to see how the Foole did handle him : but there sat he, hanging his head, lifting up the eyes, and with a deepe sigh, singing the ballad of *Come live with me and be my love : to the tune of adieu my deere.*” \*

It is, notwithstanding, to the dramas of our poet, that we must look for more copious intimations relative to the ballad-poetry of the sixteenth century, and of the first ten years of the reign of James the First. The list which we shall collect from his works, in the order in which they are usually published, will sufficiently evince his love for these productions, and, at the same time, afford a pretty accurate enumeration of those which were esteemed the most popular of his age.

Yet, in forming this catalogue of Shakspearean ballads and songs, it may be necessary to premise, that it is not our intention to comment on the original pieces of our author in this branch of poetry, which will fall under consideration in a subsequent chapter ; but merely to confine our notices to his quotations from and allusions to the minstrel strains of others. We commence, therefore, with the ballad of *Queen Dido*, which the poet had no doubt in view, when he represents Gonzalo in the *Tempest* so familiar with her name and history.† That this was a favourite song with the common people appears from a passage in a scarce pamphlet quoted by Mr. Ritson, and published in 1604. “ O you ale-knights, you that devoure the marrow of the mault, and drinke whole ale-tubs into consumptions ; that sing *Queen Dido* over a cupp, and tell strange newes over an ale-pot.” ‡ Dr. Percy, who has published a correct copy of this old ballad from his folio MS. collated with two different printed copies, both in black letter, in the Pepysian collection, terms it “ *excellent* ;” an epithet

\* British Bibliographer, No. X. pp. 559, 560. This fragment, says Mr. Haslewood, “ is in black letter, one sheet, and bears signature C.”

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 60. Act ii. sc. 1.

‡ Jacke of Dover, his quest of Inquirie, or his privy Search for the veriest Foole in England, 4to.—Vide Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 60. note 4.



justly merited, for, though blended with the manners of a Gothic age, it is certainly both pathetic and interesting.

Mrs. Ford, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, speaking of Falstaff's proposals, says, that his disposition and his words "do no more adhere and keep place together than the hundredth psalm to the tune of *Green Sleeves*." \* This seems to have been a very popular song about 1580, for it is licensed several times during this year, and entered on the books of the Stationers' Company, under the titles of "A newe northerne dittye of the Lady *Green Sleeves*," and "A new Northern Song of *Green Sleeves*, beginning

"The bonniest lass in all the land."

It is mentioned by Beaumont and Fletcher in *The Loyal Subject*, but is supposed to be now no longer extant.

In the same play, Falstaff alludes to another old song, which was entitled *Fortune my foe* †, enumerating all the misfortunes incident to mankind through the instability of fortune. Of this ballad, which is mentioned by Brewer in his *Lingua* ‡, twice by Beaumont and Fletcher §, and by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* ||, the tune is said to be the identical air now known by the song of "Death and the Lady;" and the first stanza, observes Mr. Malone, was as follows:—

"Fortune, my foe, why dost thou frown on me?  
And will my fortune never better be?  
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain,  
And wilt thou not restore my joys again?" ¶

Sir Hugh Evans, in the first scene of the third act of this \*\* play, quotes, though from his trepidation very inaccurately, four lines from

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 64. and note by Steevens.

† Ibid. p. 130. Act iii. sc. 3.

‡ Ancient British Drama, vol. ii. p. 219. col. 1. Act iii. sc. 7.

§ Custom of the Country, act i. sc. 1. The Knight of the Burning Pestle, act v.

|| Anatomy of Melancholy, edit. 1632. p. 576.

¶ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 131. note 8.

\*\* Ibid. p. 110.

two of the most popular little madrigals at the close of the sixteenth century, entitled *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, and *The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd*; the first written by Christopher Marlow, and the second by Sir Walter Raleigh. These had been attributed, however, to Shakspeare, in consequence of their being included in a copy of his smaller poems printed by William Jaggard in 1599. This edition being published during the life-time of the poet, gave currency to the ascription; but in the year following Marlow's poem appeared in *England's Helicon*, with his name annexed, and Raleigh's with his usual signature of *Ignoto*\*; and Isaac Walton, in the first edition of his *Compleat Angler*, printed in 1653, has attributed these pieces to the same authors, describing them as "that smooth song, which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and — an Answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days — old fashioned poetry," he adds, "but choicely good; I think much better then the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age."† Had Marlow written nothing but this beautiful song, he would yet have descended to posterity as an excellent poet; the imitations of it have been numerous.

The *Twelfth Night* presents us with a variety of fragments of ballads, songs, and catches; Sir Andrew Ague-cheek calls for the catch of *Thou Knave*, of which the words and musical notes are given by Sir J. Hawkins‡; Sir Toby compares Olivia to *Peg-a Ramsay*, a licentious song mentioned by Nash among several other ballads, such as *Rogero*, *Basilino*, *Turkelony*, *All the Flowers of the Broom*, *Pepper is black*, *Green Sleeves*, *Peggie Ramsie*; and immediately afterwards this jovial knight quotes several detached lines from as many separate ballads, for instance, *Three merry men be we*; *There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady*; *O the twelfth day of December*;

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\* *England's Helicon*, 3d edit., reprint of 1812. p. 214, 215.

† *Compleat Angler*, Bagster's edit. 1808. pp. 147, 148.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 293. Act ii. sc. 3.



*Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.* \* Of these the first was a burden common to many ancient songs, and is called in *The Old Wives Tale*, by George Peele, 1595, an *Old Proverb*, and is thus given :—

“ Three merrie men, and three merrie men,  
And three merrie men be wee;  
I in the wood, and thou on the ground,  
And Jack sleepes in the tree :” †

an association which acquired such notoriety as to become the frequent sign of an ale-house, under the appellation of *The Three Merry Boys*. The second is the first line and the burden of a ballad which was licensed by T. Colwell, in 1562, under the title of *The goodly and constant Wyfe Susanna*. It is preserved in the Pepysian collection, and the first stanza of it has been quoted by Dr. Percy in his *Reliques* ‡; the burden *lady, lady*, is again alluded to by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 4. The third has not been traced to its source, but the fourth, and the subsequent lines, are taken, with a little variation, from *Corydon's Farewell To Phillis*, published in a little black letter miscellany, called “The Golden Garland of Princely Delights,” and reprinted entire by Dr. Percy. §

In act iv. sc. 2. the clown is introduced singing part of the first two stanzas of a song which has been discovered among the ancient MSS. of Dr. Harrington of Bath, and there ascribed, though perhaps not correctly, to Sir Thomas Wyatt. It is evident that Shakspeare trusted to his memory in the quotation of these popular pieces, for most of them deviate, in some degree, from the originals; in the present instance, the first two lines, as given by the clown,

“ Hey Robin, jolly Robin,  
Tell me how thy lady does,”

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. pp. 294—297. 299.

† Ibid. v. p. 296. note by Steevens.

‡ Vol. i. p. 220.

§ Reliques, vol. i. p. 220.

are substituted for the opening stanza of the old song: —

“ A Robyn,  
Jolly Robyn,  
Tell me how thy leman doeth,  
And thou shalt knowe of myn.” \*

The commencement of a madrigal, the composition of William Elderton, is sung by Benedict, in *Much Ado about Nothing* :

“ The god of love,  
That sits above,” &c. †

and a song beginning in a similar manner, is mentioned by Mr. Ritson, to be in *Bacchus' Bountie*, 4to. bl. l. 1593; Elderton's production was parodied by a puritan of the name of Birch, under the title of “ The Complaint of a Sinner.” ‡

In *Love's Labour's Lost* a sweet air, as Armado terms it, commencing with the word *Concolinel*, is sung by Moth §, but no further intimation is given; and in another part of the same comedy, the burden of an ancient ditty is chaunted by Roseline and Boyet. || In *As You Like It* Touchstone quotes a stanza from a ballad of which the first line is *O sweet Oliver*, and which appears to be the same with the ballad of

“ O sweete Olyver  
Leave me not behinde thee,

entered by Richard Jones, on the books of the Stationers' Company, August 6th, 1584 ¶; and in the subsequent act, Orlando alludes to a madrigal under the title of *Wit whither wilt*. \*\*

*All's Well that Ends Well* affords but two passages from the minstrel poesy of the day, which are put into the mouth of the clown;

\* Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 194.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 166.

§ Ibid. vol. vii. p. 51. Act iii. sc. 1.

¶ Ibid. vol. viii. p. 119. Act iii. sc. 3.

‡ Ibid. p. 166. note.

|| Ibid. p. 82. Act iv. sc. 1.

\*\* Ibid. p. 144. Act iv. sc. 1.



one of these is evidently taken from a ballad on the *Sacking of Troy*, and the other seems to have been the chorus of a song on courtship or marriage. \*

From the *Taming of the Shrew* we collect the initial lines of two apparently very popular ballads; the first beginning *Where is the life that late I led* †, which is likewise quoted by Ancient Pistol ‡, and referred to in *A gorgeous Gallery of gallant Inventions*, 4to. 1578; there is also a song or sonnet with this title, observes Mr. Malone, in *a handeful of pleasant Delites, containing sundrie new Sonets, &c.* 1584, where we read of " Dame Beautie's replie to the lover late at libertie, and now complaineth himselfe to be her captive, intituled, *Where is the life that late I led* :

" The life that erst thou led'st, my friend,  
Was pleasant to thine eyes," &c. §

The second fragment with which Petruchio has favoured us, commencing

" It was the friar of orders grey,  
As he forth walked on his way," ||

has given rise to one of the most pleasing and pathetic of modern ballads, founded on a professed introduction of as many of our poet's ballad fragments as could consistently be adapted. " Dispersed through Shakspeare's plays," says the ingenious associator, " are innumerable

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. viii. pp. 238—240. Act i. sc. 3.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 131. Act iv. sc. 1.—There appears to be allusions to two catches in this scene. Grumio exclaims "*fire, fire; cast on no water,*" which Judge Blackstone traces to the following old catch in three parts:—

" Scotland burneth, Scotland burneth.  
Fire, fire; — Fire, fire;  
Cast on some more water."

Grumio a little afterwards calls out, "*Why, Jack boy! ho boy!*" the beginning, as Sir John Hawkins asserts, of an old round in three parts, of which he has given us the musical notes.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 244. § Ibid. vol. ix. p. 131. note.

|| Ibid. vol. ix. p. 132. Act iv. sc. 1.

little fragments of ancient ballads, the entire copies of which could not be recovered. Many of these being of the most beautiful and pathetic simplicity, the editor was tempted to select some of them, and with a few supplemental stanzas to connect them together, and form them into a little Tale." \* That much taste and poetic spirit, together with a very successful effort in combination, have been exhibited in this little piece, the public approbation has unequivocally decided.

To the character of Autolycus, in the *Winter's Tale*, a very humorous exemplar of the fallen state of the minstrel tribe, we are indebted for some illustration of the prevalency of ballad-writing at the commencement of the reign of James the First. Most of the songs attributed to this adroit rogue, are, there is reason to think, the composition of Shakspeare, with the exception of the catch beginning *Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way* †; but, in his capacity of ballad-vender, he throws considerable light on the subjects to which these motley strains were devoted. He is represented as having ballads of all descriptions, and "the prettiest love-songs for maids" — "and where some stretch-mouth'd rascal would, as it were, mean mischief, and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer, *Whoop, do me no harm, good man*; puts him off, slights him, with *Whoop, do me no harm, good man.*" ‡ Accordingly at the Fair he is applied to for these precious wares: —

\* Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 259.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 328. Act iv. sc. 2.

‡ Ibid. p. 346. Act iv. sc. 3.—We shall add, in this note, in order to complete the catalogue, all the fragments of ancient minstrelsy that have escaped our enumeration in the text.

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Pandarus, lamenting the approaching departure of Cressida, expresses his sorrow by quoting an old song beginning —

" O heart, o heart, o heavy heart,  
Why sigh'st thou without breaking."

Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xv. p. 393.

Hamlet, bantering Polonius, quotes part of the first stanza of a ballad entitled, *Jephtha, Judge of Israel*. This has been published by Dr. Percy, retrieved, as he relates, from



*Clo.* What hast here? ballads?

*Mop.* Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print, a'-life: for then we are sure they are true.

*Aut.* Here's one to a very doleful tune, How a usurer's wife was brought to bed of

utter oblivion by a lady, who wrote it down from memory as she had formerly heard it sung by her father. — Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 142.; and Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 189.

It is probable that Hamlet, who appears to have been well versed in ballad-lore, has again introduced two morsels from this source, in his dialogue with Horatio on the conduct of the king at the play: they strongly mark his triumph in the success of his plan for unmasking the crimes of his uncle: —

“ Why let the stricken deer go weep,” &c.

“ For thou dost know, O Damon dear,” &c.

Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xviii. pp. 212. 214.

Iago in the drunken scene with Cassio, in the view of adding to his exhilaration, sings a portion of two songs; the first apparently a chorus,—

“ And let me the canakin, clink, clink,” &c.

the second,

“ King Stephen was a worthy peer,”

from a humorous ballad of Scotch origin, preserved by Percy in his Reliques, vol. i. p. 204. — Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. pp. 334. 336.

In Romeo and Juliet, Mercutio, in the following passage, alludes to two ballads of considerable notoriety: —

“ Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,  
When king Cophetua lov'd the beggar maid;”

the first line referring to the celebrated ballad of *Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudestly*, and the second to *King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid*; popular pieces which are again the objects of allusion in *Much Ado about Nothing*, act i.; and in the Second Part of Henry IV. act v. sc. 3. — Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 77.; and Percy's Reliques, vol. i. pp. 154. 198.

The same play will afford us three or four additional references; Mercutio, ridiculing the old Nurse, gives us a ludicrous fragment commencing “*An old hare hoar*,” vol. xx. p. 116.; and Peter, after calling for two songs called *Heart's ease*, and *My heart is full of woe*, attempts to puzzle the musicians by asking for an explanation of the epithet *silver* in the first stanza of *A Song to the Lute in Musicke*, written by Richard Edwards, in the “*Paradise of Daintie Devises*,” and commencing,

“ Where griping griefs the hart would wounde.”

Vide Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 220. 222.  
and Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 196.

twenty money-bags at a burden ; and how she longed to eat adder's heads, and toads carbonadoed.

*Mop.* Is it true, think you ?

*Aut.* Very true ; and but a month old.

*Dor.* Bless me from marrying a usurer !

*Aut.* Here's the midwife's name to't, one mistress Taleporter ; and five or six honest wives that were present : Why should I carry lies abroad ?

*Mop.* 'Pray you now, buy it.

*Clo.* Come on, lay it by : And let's first see more ballads ; we'll buy the other things anon.

*Aut.* Here's another ballad, Of a fish, that appeared upon the coast, on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids : it was thought she was a woman, and was turned into a cold fish, for she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her : The ballad is very pitiful, and as true.

*Dor.* Is it true, think you ?

*Aut.* Five justices' hands at it ; and witnesses, more than my pack will hold.

*Clo.* Lay it by too : Another.

*Aut.* This is a merry ballad ; but a very pretty one.

*Mop.* Let's have some merry ones.

*Aut.* Why, this is a passing merry one ; and goes to the tune of, *Two maids wooing a man* : there's scarce a maid westward, but she sings it ; 'tis in request, I can tell you." \*

The request, in fact, for these popular pieces of poetry was then infinitely greater than has since obtained in more modern times ; not a murder, or an execution, not a battle or a tempest, not a wonderful event or a laughable adventure, could occur, but what was immediately thrown into the form of a ballad, and the muse supplied what humble prose now details to us among the miscellaneous articles of a news-paper ; a statement which is fully confirmed by the observation of another character in this very play, who tells us that " such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour, that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it." †

In the *Second Part of King Henry the Fourth* Falstaff enters a room, in the Boar's Head Tavern, singing the first two lines of a ballad which Dr. Percy has reprinted under the title of *Sir Lancelot Du*

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. pp. 353—355. Act iv. sc. 3

† Ibid. p. 403. Act v. sc. 2.



*Lake.* \* This, which is merely a metrical version of three chapters from the first part of *Morte Arthur*, is quoted imperfectly by the knight, owing to the interruptions attending his situation ; the opening lines of the ballad are,

“ When Arthur first in court began,  
And was approved king,”

which Falstaff mutilates and alters, by omitting the last word of the first line, and converting *approved* into *worthy*† ; the version and quotation, it may be remarked, are strong proofs of the popularity of the romance.

To the admirably drawn character of *Silence* in this play, we are indebted for several valuable fragments of popular poesy. This curious personage, who, when sober, has not a word to say, is no sooner exhilarated by the circling glass, than he chaunts forth an abundance of unconnected stanzas from the minstrelsy of his times. Having nothing original in his ideas, no fund of his own on which to draw, he marks his festivity by the vociferous repetition of scraps of catches, songs, and glees. We may, therefore, conceive the poet to have appropriated to this simple justice in his cups, the most generally known and, of course, the favourite, convivial songs of the age. They are of such a character, indeed, as to warrant the belief, that there was not a hall in Shakspeare's days but what had echoed to these jovial strains ; a conclusion which almost imperatively calls for the admission of a few, as specimens of the vocal hilarity of our ancestors, when warmed, according to Shallow's confession, by “ too much sack at supper.” ‡

“ *Sil.* Do nothing but eat and make good cheer,                    (Singing.)  
And praise heaven for the merry year ;

\* Reliques, vol. i. p. 214.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 78.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. p. 232. Act v. sc. 3.

When flesh is cheap and females dear, \*  
 And lusty lads roam here and there,  
 So merrily,  
 And ever among so merrily.

*Fal.* There's a merry heart! — Good master Silence, I'll give you a health for that anon. —

*Sil.* Be merry, be merry, my wife's as all; †  
 For women are shrews, both short and tall:  
 'Tis merry in hall, when beards wag all,  
 And welcome merry shrove-tide.

Be merry, be merry, &c.

*Fal.* I did not think, master Silence had been a man of this mettle.

*Sil.* A cup of wine, that's brisk and fine,  
 And drink unto the leman mine;  
 And a merry heart lives long-a.

*Fal.* Well said, master Silence.

*Sil.* And we shall be merry; — now comes in the sweet of the night.

*Fal.* Health and long life to you, master Silence.

*Sil.* Fill the cup and let it come;  
 I'll pledge you a mile to the bottom." ‡

After drinking another bumper, and singing another song, allusive to the rights of pledging, *Do me right, And dub me knight* §; and quoting the old ballad of *Robin Hood*, and the *Pindar of Wakefield* ||, master Silence is carried to bed, fully saturated with sack and good cheer.

A character equally versed in minstrel lore, and equally prodigal of his stock, though wanting the excuse of inebriation, has been drawn by Beaumont and Fletcher, in the person of *Old Merrythought* in their *Knight of the Burning Pestle* ¶; but, in point of nature and humour, it is a picture which falls infinitely short of Shakspeare's sketch.

Many of the old songs, or rather the fragments of them, which are scattered through the dramas of our poet, either proceed from the

\* *Dear* is here to be remembered in its double sense. — Farmer.

† *My wife's as all*, that is, as all women are. — Steevens.

‡ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xii. pp. 232—236. Act v. sc. 3.

§ Ibid. p. 237.

|| Ibid. p. 241.

¶ This play was first printed in the year 1613.



professed clown or fool of the play, or are given as the wild and desultory recollections of derangement, real or feigned; the ebullitions of a broken heart, and the unconnected sallies of a disordered mind.

Shakspeare's fools may be considered, in fact, as exact copies of the living manners and costume of these singular personages, who, in his era, formed a necessary part of the household establishment of the great. To the due execution of their functions, a lively fancy, and a copious fund of wit and sarcasm, together with an unlimited licence of uttering what imagination and the occasion prompted, were essential; but it was likewise required, that bitterness of allusion, and asperity of remark, should be softened by the constant assumption of a playful and unintentional manner. For this purpose, the indirect method of quotation, and generally from ludicrous songs and ballads, is resorted to, with the evident intention of covering what would otherwise have been too naked and too severely felt. Thus, in an old play, entitled *A very mery and pythie Comedy, called, The longer thou livest the more Foole thou art*, printed about 1580, the appearance of a character of this description is prefaced by the following stage-note:—"Entreth *Moros*, counterfaiting a vaine gesture and a foolish countenance, *synging the foote of many songs, as fools were wont.*"\*

The simple yet sarcastic drollery of the fool, and the wild ravings of the madman, have been alike employed by Shakspeare, to deepen the gloom of distress. In the tragedy of *Lear* it is difficult to ascertain whether the horrors of the scene are more heightened by the seeming thoughtless levity of the former, or by the delirious imagery of the latter. The greater part of the bitterly sportive metres, attributed to the fool, in this drama, appears evidently to have been written for the character; and as the reliques drawn from more ancient minstrelsy, seem rather the foot or burden of each song, than the commencement, and are at the same time of little poetical value, we shall forbear enumerating them. The fragments, however, allotted to Edgar are

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\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 366, note.

both characteristic, and apparently initial ; the line which Mr. Steevens asserts to have seen in an old ballad,

“ Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind,” \*

is so impressive as absolutely to chill the blood ; and the legendary pieces beginning

“ Saint Withold footed thrice the wold,” †

and

“ Child Rowland to the dark tower came,” ‡

are reliques which well accord with the dreadful peculiarity of his situation. The two subsequent quotations are from pastoral songs, of which the first,

“ Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,” §

as Mr. Malone observes, has a marked propriety, alluding to an association then common ; for in a description of beggars, published in 1607, one class of these vagabonds is represented as counterfeiting madness ;

————— “ they were so frantique  
They knew not what they did, but every day  
Make sport with stick and flowers like an antique ; —  
*One calls herself poor Besse, the other Tom.*” ||

The second seems to have been suggested to the mind of Edgar by some connection, however distant and obscure, with the business of the scene. Lear fancies he is trying his daughters ; and the lines of Edgar, who is appointed one of the commission, allude to a trespass

\* Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xvii. p. 463, and 490, note. This finely descriptive line, Dr. Percy has interwoven in his ballad of *The Friar of Orders Gray*.

† Reed's Shakspeare vol. xvii. p. 472. Act iii. sc. 4.

‡ Ibid. p. 478. Act iii. sc. 4.

§ Ibid. p. 484. Act iii. sc. 6.

|| Ibid. p. 485, note by Malone.



which takes place in consequence of the folly of a shepherd in neglecting his charge, — the lines appear to be the opening stanza of a lyric pastoral. “A shepherd,” remarks Dr. Johnson, “is desired to pipe, and the request is enforced by a promise, that though his sheep be in the corn, *i. e.* committing a trespass by his negligence — yet a single tune upon his pipe shall secure them from the pound.

“Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?  
Thy sheep be in the corn;  
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,  
Thy sheep shall take no harm.” \*

If the assumed madness of Edgar is heightened by the casual repetition of these artless strains, how is the real distraction of the heart-broken Ophelia augmented in its pathos by a similar appeal! The interesting fragments which she sings, certainly do not produce their effect, as Sir Joshua Reynolds imagined, by marking an “utter insensibility to her own misfortunes †;” for they manifestly refer both to her father’s death, and to her own unfortunate attachment, their influence over the heart being felt as the consequence of this indirect allusion.

Of the first three fragments, which appear to be parts of the same ballad, and, as the king observes, are a “conceit upon her father,” the two prior have been beautifully incorporated by Dr. Percy in his *Friar of Orders Gray*:

“How should I your true love know,  
From another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff,  
And his sandal shoon.”

He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;  
At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.” ‡

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\* Reed’s Shakespeare, vol. xvii. p. 486.

† Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 278. note.

‡ Ibid. p. 278—280. Act iv. sc. 5.

The first line of the third,

“ White his shroud as the mountain snow,”

has been parodied by Chatterton, in the Mynstrelle’s Songe in Cella,

“ Whyte his rode as the sommer snowe.”

The subsequent songs, beginning

“ Good morrow, ’tis Saint Valentine’s day,

and

“ By Gis, and by Saint Charity,” \*

were, there is little doubt, suggested to the fair sufferer’s mind, by an obscure and distant association with the issue of her unfortunate amour, a connection, however, which is soon dissipated by reverting to the fate of her father, the scene closing with two fragments exquisitely adapted to unfold the workings of her mind on this melancholy event.

“ They bore him barefac’d on the bier —  
And in his grave rain’d many a tear.” †

“ And will he not come again ?  
And will he not come again ?  
No, no, he is dead,  
Go to thy death-bed,  
He never will come again, &c.” ‡

passages of which Dr. Percy has admirably availed himself in his *Friar of Orders Gray*, and to which the Mynstrelle’s song in Cella is indebted for its pathetic burden :

“ *Mie love ys dedde,  
Gonne to his deathe-bedde,  
Alle underre the wyllowe tree.*” §

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 281, 282. Act iv. sc. 5.

† Ibid. vol. xviii. p. 292. Act iv. sc. 5.

‡ Ibid. p. 299. Act iv. sc. 5.

§ Poems, supposed to have been written at Bristol, by Thomas Rowley, and others. Cambridge edition, 1794, p. 70.



The vacillation of poor Ophelia amid her heavy afflictions is rendered strikingly apparent by the insertion of two ballad lines between the stanzas last quoted, which again manifestly allude to her lover:—

“ *Oph.* You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him adown-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master’s daughter. ———” \*

“ For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.” †

We may remark that the expression, “ *O, how the wheel becomes it!*” is meant to imply the popularity of the song, that

“ The *spinsters* and the knitters in the sun  
Do use to *chaunt* it,

a custom which, as exercised in the winter, is beautifully exemplified by Mr. Malone, in a passage from Sir Thomas Overbury’s characters, 1614:—“ She makes her hands hard with labour, and her head soft with pittie; and when winter evenings fall early, sitting at her merry *whee*le, she sings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune.” ‡

In the church-yard scene of this play, one of the grave-diggers, after amusing himself and his companion by queries, which, as Mr. Steevens observes, “ perhaps composed the chief festivity of our ancestors by an evening fire ||; sings three stanzas, though somewhat corrupted either by design or accident, of “ A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble quene Marye, representing the image of death.” § This poem was originally published in Tottel’s edition of Surrey and Wyatt, and the Poems of Uncertain Authors; the earliest poetical miscellany in our language, and first printed in 1557 under the title of “ Songes and sonettes by the right honourable Henry Howard, late earl of Surrey, and other.” To this very popular collection, which underwent many editions during the sixteenth cen-

\* Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. xviii. p. 293.

† Ibid. p. 294. note.

§ Warton’s Hist. of Eng. Poetry, vol. iii. p. 45.

† Ibid. p. 298.

|| Ibid. p. 322, note 4.

ture\*, Slender alludes, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where he exclaims, "I had rather than forty shillings, I had my book of *Songs and Sonnets* here †;" from which we may conclude that this was the fashionable manual for lovers in the age of Elizabeth. Lord Vaux's lines have been reprinted by Dr. Percy, who remarks on the apparent corruptions of Shakspeare's transcript, that they were "perhaps so designed by the poet himself, the better to suit the character of an illiterate clown." ‡

No fragment of our minstrel poetry has been introduced by Shakspeare with greater beauty and effect, than the melancholy ditty which he represents Desdemona as singing, under a presentiment of her approaching fate :

"Des. My mother had a maid call'd — Barbara ;  
She was in love ; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,  
And did forsake her : she had a song of — willow,  
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,  
And she died singing it : That song to-night,  
Will not go from my mind ; I have much to do,  
But to go hang my head all at one side,  
And sing it like poor Barbara." §

Of this song of willow, ushered in with such a powerful appeal to the heart, Dr. Percy has given us a copy in his *Reliques* || ; it is in two parts, and proves that the poet has not only materially altered the few lines which he quotes, but has changed also the sex of its subject ; for in the original in the Pepys collection, it is entitled "A Lover's Complaint, being forsaken of *his* Love."

From the ample, we may almost say complete, enumeration, which we have now given, of the fragments selected by Shakspeare from the minstrel-poetry of his country, together with the accompanying remarks, may be formed, not only a tolerably accurate estimate of the

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\* Namely in 1565, 1567, 1569, 1574, 1585, 1587, &c.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 27.

‡ *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 186.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xix. p. 472. Act iv. sc. 3.

|| Vol. i. p. 208.



most popular songs of this period, but a clear idea of the use to which Shakspeare has applied them.\* They will be found, in fact, with scarcely any exceptions, either elucidatory of the business of the scene, illustrative of the progress of the passions, or powerfully assistant in developing the features and the shades of character.

It will appear also, from the view which has been taken of romantic literature, as comprehending all the branches noticed in this chapter, that its influence, in the age of our poet, was great and universally diffused; that he was himself, perhaps more than any other individual, if we except Spenser, addicted to its study and partial to its fictions; and that, if we take into consideration, what will hereafter be mentioned, the bases of his various plays, he may be affirmed to have availed himself of its stores often with great skill, and with as much frequency as the nature of the province which he cultivated, would admit.

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\* To form a complete enumeration of the songs of the Elizabethan era, it would be necessary not only to consult *all* the dramatic writers of this age, but to acquire a perfect series of the very numerous *Collections of Madrigals* which were published during the same period.

## CHAPTER IV.

## CURSORY VIEW OF POETRY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE DRAMA, DURING THE AGE OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE space which elapsed between the birth and the death of Shakspeare, from April 1564 to April 1616, a period of fifty-two years, may be pronounced, perhaps, the most fertile in our annals, with regard to the production of poetical literature. Not only were the great outlines of every branch of poetry chalked out with skill and precision, but many of its highest departments were filled up and finished in a manner so masterly as to have bid defiance to all subsequent competition. Consequently if we take a survey of the various channels through which the genius of poetry has been accustomed to diffuse itself, it will be found, that, during this half century, every province had its cultivators; that poems epic and dramatic, historic and didactic, lyric and romantic, that satires, pastorals, and sonnets, songs, madrigals, and epigrams, together with a multitude of translations, brightened and embellished its progress.

On a subject, however, so productive, and which would fill volumes, it is necessary, that, in consonancy with the limits and due keeping of our plan, the utmost solicitude for condensation be observed. In this chapter, accordingly, which, to a certain extent, is meant to be introductory to a critical consideration of the miscellaneous poems of Shakspeare, the dramatic writers are omitted; a future section of the work being appropriated to a detail of their more peculiar labours for the stage.

After a few general observations, therefore, on the poetry of this era, it is our intention to give short critical notices of the principal bards who flourished during its transit; and with the view of affording some idea of the extensive culture and diffusion of poetic taste, an



alphabetical table of the minor poets, accompanied by slight memoranda, will be added. An account of the numerous *Collections* of Poetry which reflect so much credit on this age, and a few remarks and inferences, more particularly with respect to Shakspeare's study of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries in miscellaneous poetry, will complete this portion of our subject.

The causes which chiefly contributed to produce this fertility in poetical genius may, in a great measure, be drawn from what has been already remarked under the heads of *superstition*, *literature*, and *romance*.

The sun of philosophy and science, which had just risen with the most captivating beauty, and which promised a meridian of uncommon splendour, had not yet fully dissipated those mists that for centuries had enveloped and darkened the human mind. What remained, however, of the popular creed, was much less gross and less contradictory to common experience, than what had vanished from the scroll; these reliques were, indeed, such, as either appealed powerfully to a warm and creative imagination, or were intimately connected with those apprehensions which agitate the breast of man, when speculating on his destiny in another and higher order of existence.

Under the first of these classes may be included all that sportive, wild, and terrific imagery which resulted from a partial belief in the operations of fairies, witches, and magicians, and in the reveries of the alchemist, the rosicrusian, and the astrologer; and under the second will be found, what can scarcely be termed superstition in the customary sense, that awful and mysterious conception of the spiritual world, which supposes its frequent intervention, through the agency either of departed spirits, or superhuman beings.

The opinions which prevailed with regard to these topics in the days of Shakspeare, were such as exactly suited the higher regions of poetry, without giving any violent shock to the deductions of advancing philosophy. The national credulity had been, in fact, greatly chastised through the efforts of enquiry and research, and

though it may still appear great to us, was in perfect accordance with the progress of civilisation, and certainly much better calculated for poetic purposes than has been any subsequent though purer creed.

The state of *literature*, too, was precisely of that kind which favoured, in a very high degree, the nurture of poetical genius. The vocabulary of our language was rich, beyond all example, both in natives and exotics; not only in "new grafts of old withered words \*," but in a multitude of expressive terms borrowed from the learned languages; and this wealth was used freely and without restriction, and without the smallest apprehension of censure.

An enthusiastic spirit for literary acquisition had been created and cherished by the revival, the study, and the translation of the *ancient classics*; and through this medium an exhaustless mine of imagery and allusion was laid open to our vernacular poets.

Nor were these advantages blighted or checked by the fastidious canons of dictatorial *criticism*. Puttenham's was the only *Art of Poetry* which had made its appearance, and, though a taste for discussion of this kind was rapidly advancing, the poet was yet left independent of the critic; at liberty to indulge every flight of imagination, and every sally of feeling; to pursue his first mode of conception, and to adopt the free diction of the moment.

The age of *chivalry and romance*, also, had not yet passed away; the former, it is true, was verging fast towards dissolution, but its tone was still exalting and heroic, while the latter continued to throw a rich, though occasionally a fantastic light over every species of poetic composition. In short, the unrestricted copiousness of our language, the striking peculiarities of our national superstition, the wild beauties of Gothic invention, and the playful sallies of Italian fiction, combined with a plentiful infusion of classic lore, and operating on native genius, gave origin, not only to an unparalleled number of great bards, but to a cast of poetry unequalled in this

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\* Preface to *Gondibert*. Vide Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. vi. p. 351.



country for its powers of description and creation, for its simplicity and energy of diction, and for its wide dominion over the feelings.

If we proceed to consider the *versification*, *economy*, and *sentiment* of the Elizabethan poetry, candour must confess, that considerable defects will be found associated with beauties equally prominent, especially in the first and second of these departments. We must be understood, however, as speaking here only of rhymed poetry, for were the blank verse of our dramatic poets of this epoch included, there can be no doubt but that in versification likewise the palm must be awarded to Shakspeare and his contemporaries. Indeed, even in the construction of rhyme, the inferiority of our ancestors is nearly, if not altogether, confined to their management of the pentameter couplet; and here, it must be granted, that, in their best artificers of this measure, in the pages of Daniel, Drayton, and Browne, great deficiencies are often perceptible both in harmony and cadence, in polish and compactness. It has been said by a very pleasing, and, in general, a very judicious critic, that "the older poets *disdained* stooping to the character of syllable-mongers; as their conceptions were vigorous, they trusted to the simple provision of nature for their equipment; and though often introduced into the world *ragged*, they were always healthy." \* Now versification is to poetry, what colouring is to painting, and though by no means among the higher provinces of the art, yet he who *disdains* its cultivation, loses one material hold upon the reader's attention; for, though plainness and simplicity of garb best accord with vigour, sublimity, or pathos of conception, *raggedness* can never coincide in the production of any grand or pleasing effect.

It is remarkable, however, that, in lyrical composition, the poets of Elizabeth's reign, so far from being defective in harmony of metre, frequently possess the most studied modulation; and numbers of

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\* Headley's Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, vol. i. Introduction, p. 19. edit. 1810.

their songs and madrigals, as well as many stanzas of their longer poems constructed on the model of the Italian *octava rima*, exhibit in their versification so much high-finishing, and such an exquisite polish, as must render doubtful, in this province, at least, the assumed superiority of modern art.

A more striking desideratum in the poetry of this era has arisen from a want of economy in the use of imagery and ornament, and in the distribution of parts as relative to a whole. That relief, which is produced by a judicious management of light and shade, appears to have been greatly neglected; the eye, after having been fatigued by an unsubdued splendour and warmth of style, suddenly passes to an extreme poverty of colouring, without any intermediate tint to blend and harmonize the parts; in short, to drop the metaphor, after a prodigal profusion of imagery and description, the exhausted bard sinks for pages together into a strain remarkable only for its flatness and imbecillity. To this want of union in style, may be added an equal defalcation in the disposition, connection, and dependency of the various portions of an extended whole. These requisites, which are usually the result of long and elaborate study, have been successfully cultivated by the moderns, who, since the days of Pope, have paid a scrupulous attention to the mechanism of versification, to the consonancy and keeping of style, and to the niceties and economy of arrangement.

We can ascribe, however, to the poets of Elizabeth's reign the greater merit of excelling in energy and truth of *sentiment*, in simplicity of diction, in that artless language of nature which irresistibly makes its way to the heart. To excite the emotions of sublimity, of terror, of pity, an appeal to the artificial graces of modern growth will not be found successful; on the contrary, experience has taught us, that in the higher walks of poetry, where sensations of grandeur and astonishment are to be raised, or where the passions in all their native vigour are to be called forth, we must turn to the earlier stages of the art, when the poet, unshackled by the overwhelming influence of venerated models, unawed by the



frowns of criticism, and his flow of thought undiverted by any laborious attention to the minutiae of diction and cadence, looked abroad for himself, and drew fresh from the page of surrounding nature, and from the workings of his own breast, the imagery, and the feelings, which he was solicitous to impress. In consequence of this self-dependence, this appeal to original sources, the poetry of the period under our notice possesses a strength, a raciness, and verisimilitude which have since very rarely been attained, and which more than compensate for any subordinate defects in the ornamental departments of metre, or style.

It is conceivable, indeed, that a poet may arise, who shall happily combine, even in a long poem of the highest class, the utmost refinements of recent art, with the originality, strength, and independency of our elder bards ; it is a phenomenon, however, rather to be wished for than expected, as the excellencies peculiar to these widely-separated eras appear to be, in their highest degree, nearly incompatible. Yet is the attempt not to be given up in despair ; in short poems, especially of the lyric species, we know that this union has been effected among us ; for Gray, to very lofty flights of sublimity, has happily united the utmost splendour of diction, and the utmost brilliancy of versification ; and even in a later and more extended instance, in "The Pleasures of Hope" by Mr. Campbell, we find some of the noblest conceptions of poetry clothed in metre exquisitely sweet and polished, and possessing at the same time great variety of modulation, and a considerable share of simplicity in its construction.

If, however, upon the large scale, which the highest cast of poetry demands, the studied harmony of later times be found incapable of coalescing with effect, there can be no doubt what school we should adopt ; for who would not prefer the sublime though unadorned conception of Michael Angelo to the glowing colouring even of such an artist as Titian?

Of the larger poems of the age of Shakspeare, the defects may be considered as of two kinds, either apparent only, or real ; under the



first may be classed that want of high-finishing which is the result, partly of its incompatibility with greatness of design, and partly as the effect of a just taste; for much of the minor poetry of the reign of Elizabeth, as hath been previously observed, is polished even to excess; while under the second are to be placed the positive defects of want of union in style, and want of connection and arrangement in economy; omissions not resulting from necessity, and which are scarcely to be atoned for by any excellencies, however transcendent.

It is creditable to the present age, that in the higher poetry several of our bards have in a great degree reverted to the ancient school; that, in attempting to emulate the genius of their predecessors, they have judiciously adopted their strength and simplicity of diction, their freedom and variety of metre, preserving at the same time, and especially in the disposition of their materials, and the keeping of their style, whatever of modern refinement can aptly blend with or heighten the effect of the sublime, though often severely chaste outline, of the first masters of their art.

That meretricious glare of colouring, that uniform though seductive polish, and that monotony of versification, which are but too apparent in the school of Pope, and which have been carried to a disgusting excess by Darwin and his disciples, not only vitiate and dilute all developement of intense emotion, but even paralyse that power of picturesque delineation, which can only subsist under an uncontrolled freedom of execution, where, both in language and rhythm, the utmost variety and energy have their full play. He who in sublimity and pathos has made the nearest approach to our three immortal bards, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, and who may, therefore, claim the fourth place in our poetical annals, the lamented Chatterton; and he who, in the present day, stands unrivalled for his numerous and masterly sketches of character, and for the truth, locality, and vigour of his descriptions, the poet of Marmion and of Rokeby; are both well known to have built their fame upon what may be emphatically termed the old *English* school of poesy. The difference between them is, that while both revert to the



costume and imagery of the olden time, one adheres, in a great measure, to the language of his day, while the other must be deemed a laborious though not very successful imitator of the phraseology and extrinsic garb of the remote period to which, for no very laudable purpose, he has assigned his productions.

These few remarks on the poetry of our ancestors being premised, the critical notices to which we have alluded, may with propriety commence ; and in executing this part of the subject, as well as in the tabular form which follows, an alphabetical arrangement will be observed.

1. BEAUMONT, SIR JOHN. Though the poems of this author were not published, yet were they written, during the age of Shakspeare, and consequently demand our notice in this chapter. He was the elder brother of Francis the dramatic poet, and was born at Gracedieu, in Leicestershire, in 1582. He very early attached himself to poetical studies, and all his productions in this way were the amusements of his youthful days. Of these, the most elaborate is entitled " Bosworth Field," a very animated, and often a very poetical detail of the circumstances which are supposed immediately to precede and accompany this celebrated struggle. The versification merits peculiar praise ; there is an ease, a vigour, and a harmony in it, not equalled, perhaps, by any other poet of his time ; many of the couplets, indeed, are such as would be distinguished for the beauty of their construction, even in the writings of Pope. An encomium so strong as this may require some proofs for its support, and among the number which might be brought forward, three shall be adduced as specimens not only of finished versification, but of the energy and heroism of the sentiments which pervade this striking poem.

" There he beholds a high and glorious throne,  
Where sits a king by lawrell garlands knowne,  
Like bright Apollo in the Muses' quires,  
His radiant eyes are watchfull heavenly fires ;  
Beneath his feete pale Envie bites her chaine,  
And snaky Discord whets her sting in vaine."

Ferrers, addressing Richard, exclaims, —

“ I will obtaine to-day, alive or dead,  
The crownes that grace a faithfull souldiers head.  
‘Blest be thy tongue,’ replies the king, ‘in thee  
The strength of all thine ancestors I see,  
Extending warlike armes for England’s good,  
By thee their heire, in valour as in blood.’”

On the flight of Catesby, who advises Richard to embrace a similar mode of securing his personal safety, the King indignantly answers,

“ Let cowards trust their horses’ nimble feete,  
And in their course with new destruction meete;  
Gaine thou some houres to draw thy fearefull breath:  
To me ignoble flight is worse than death.”

Of the conclusion of Bosworth Field, Mr. Chalmers has justly observed, that “ the lines describing the death of the tyrant may be submitted with confidence to the admirers of Shakspeare.” \*

The translations and miscellaneous poems of Sir John include several pieces of considerable merit. We would particularly point out Claudian’s Epigram on the Old Man of Verona, and the verses on his “ dear sonne Gervase Beaumont.”

Sir John died in the winter of 1628, aged forty-six.

2. BRETON, NICHOLAS. Of this prolific poet few authenticated facts are known. His first publication, entitled, “ A small handfull of fragrant flowers,” was printed in 1575; if we therefore allow him to have reached the age of twenty-one before he commenced a writer, the date of his birth may, with some probability, be assigned to the year 1554. The number of his productions was so great, that a character in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Scornful Lady*, declares that he had undertaken “ with labour and experience the collection of those thousand pieces — of that our honour’d Englishman, Nich. Breton †” Ritson has given a catalogue of twenty-nine, independent of his

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\* Chalmers’s English Poets, vol. vi. p. 4.

† Act ii.



contributions to the "Phoenix Nest" and "England's Helicon," and five more are recorded by Mr. Park in the *Censura Literaria*. \* Most of these are poetical, some a mixed composition of rhyme and prose, and a few entirely prose; they are all extremely scarce, certainly not the consequence of mediocrity or want of notice, for they have been praised by Puttenham †, Meres ‡, and Phillips; and one of his most beautiful ballads is inserted in "The Muse's Library," 1740. After a lapse of twenty-five years, Dr. Percy recalled the attention of the public to our author by inserting in his *Reliques* the same piece which Mrs. Cowper had previously chosen §; in 1801 Mr. Ellis favoured us with eight specimens, from his pamphlets and "England's Helicon ||," and Mr. Park has since added two very valuable extracts to the number. ¶ These induce us to wish for a more copious selection, and at the same time enable us to declare, that as a lyric and pastoral poet he possessed, if not a splendid, yet a pleasing and elegant flow of fancy, together with great sweetness and simplicity of expression, and a more than common portion of metrical harmony.

He is supposed, on the authority of an epitaph in the church of Norton, a village in Northamptonshire, to have died on the 22d of June 1624. †

3. BROWNE, WILLIAM, was born at Tavistock, in Devonshire, in 1590, and, there is reason to suppose, began very early to cultivate his poetical talents; for in the first book of his *Britannias Pastorals*, which were published in folio, in 1613, when in his twenty-third year, he speaks of himself, "as weake in yeares as skill," an expres-

\* Vol. ix. p. 163.

† *Arte of English Poesie*, reprint of 1811. p. 49.

‡ *Vide Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 47.

§ *Percy's Reliques*, vol. iii. p. 62.

|| *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 240.

¶ *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. pp. 159. 161.

† *Shaw's Staffordshire*, vol. i. p. 442. *Ritson's Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 143.

‡ *Chalmers's English Poets*, vol. vi. p. 268. col. 2.

sion which leads to the supposition that his earlier pastorals were written before he had attained the age of twenty. Indeed all his poetry appears to have been written previous to his thirtieth year. In 1614, he printed in octavo, *The Shepherds Pipe*, in seven eclogues; in 1616, the second part of his *Britannias Pastorals* was given to the public, and in 1620, his *Inner Temple Mask* is supposed to have been first exhibited.

Browne enjoyed a large share of popularity during his life-time; numerous commendatory poems are prefixed to the first edition of his pastorals; and, in a copy of the second impression of 1625, in the possession of Mr. Beloe, and which seems to have been a presentation copy to Exeter College, Oxford, of which Browne was a member and Master of Arts, there are thirteen adulatory addresses to the poet, from different students of this society, and in the handwriting of each.\* Among his earliest eulogists are found the great characters Selden, Drayton, and Jonson, by whom he was highly respected both as a poet and as a man; and as a still more imperishable honour, we must not forget to mention, that he was a favourite with our divine Milton.

Until lately, however, he has been under little obligation to subsequent times; nearly one hundred and fifty years elapsed before a third edition of his poems employed the press; this came out in 1772, under the auspices of Mr. Thomas Davies, and, with the exception of some extracts in Hayward's *British Muse*, this long interval passed without any attempt to revive his fame, by any judicious specimens of his genius.† A more propitious era followed the republication of Davies; in 1787, Mr. Headley obliged us with some striking proofs of, and some excellent remarks on, his beauties; in 1792, his whole works were incorporated in the edition of the poets, by Dr. Anderson; in 1801, Mr. Ellis gave further extension to his fame by additional examples, and in 1810 his productions again

\* Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, vol. vi. p. 58. et seq.

† It is sufficient praise, however, to remark, that Milton, both in his *L'Allegro* and his *Lycidas*, is under many obligations to our author.



became a component part of a body of English poetry in the very elaborate and comprehensive edition of the English Poets, by Mr. Chalmers.

Still it appears to us, that sufficient justice has not, since the era of Milton, been paid to his talents ; for, though it be true, as Mr. Headley has observed, that puerilities, forced allusions, and conceits, have frequently debased his materials ; yet are these amply atoned for by some of the highest excellencies of his art ; by an imagination ardent and fertile, and sometimes sublime ; by a vivid personification of passion ; by a minute and truly faithful delineation of rural scenery ; by a peculiar vein of tenderness which runs through the whole of his pastorals, and by a versification uncommonly varied and melodious. With these are combined a species of romantic extravagancy which sometimes heightens, but more frequently degrades, the effect of his pictures. Had he exhibited greater judgment in the selection of his imagery, and greater simplicity in his style, his claim on posterity had been valid, had been general and undisputed. Browne is conjectured by Wood to have died in the winter of 1645. \*

4. CHALKHILL, JOHN. This poet was the intimate friend of Spenser, a gentleman, a scholar, and, to complete the encomium, a man of strict moral character. He was the author of a pastoral history, entitled, *Thealma and Clearchus* ; but “ he died,” relates Mrs. Cooper, “ before he could perfect even the Fable of his poem, and, by many passages in it, I half believe, he had not given the last hand to what he has left behind him. However, to do both him and his editor

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\* We are told by Prince, in his “Worthies of Devonshire,” that as Browne “had honoured his country with his sweet and elegant Pastorals, so it was expected, and he also entreated a little farther to grace it by his drawing out the line of his poetic ancestors, beginning in Joseph Iscanus, and ending in himself.” Had this design been executed, how much more full and curious had our information been with regard to Shakspeare and his contemporaries, and how much is it to be lamented that so noble a scheme was relinquished.

Since these critical notices were written, Sir Egerton Brydges has favoured the world with some hitherto unpublished poems of Browne ; productions which not only support the opinions given in the text, but which tend very considerably to heighten our estimation of the genius and imagination of this fine old bard.

justice, if my opinion can be of any weight, 'tis great pity so beautiful a relique should be lost ; and the quotations I have extracted from it will sufficiently evidence a fine vein of imagination, a taste far from being indelicate, and both language and numbers uncommonly harmonious and polite.”\*

The editor alluded to by Mrs. Cooper was the amiable Isaac Walton, who published this elegant fragment in 8vo. in 1683, when he was ninety years old, and who has likewise inserted two songs by Chalkhill in his “ Complete Angler.” †

The pastoral strains of Chalkhill merit the eulogium of their female critic ; the versification, more especially, demands our notice, and may be described, in many instances, as possessing the spirit, variety, and harmony of Dryden. To verify this assertion, let us listen to the following passages ; describing the Golden age, he informs us,

“ Their sheep found cloathing, earth provided food,  
And Labour drest it as their wills thought good :  
On unbought delicacies their hunger fed,  
And for their drink the swelling clusters bled :  
The vallies rang with their delicious strains,  
And Pleasure revell'd on those happy plains.”

How beautifully versified is the opening of his picture of the Temple of Diana !

“ Within a little silent grove hard by,  
Upon a small ascent, he might espy  
A stately chapel, richly gilt without,  
Beset with shady sycamores about :  
And, ever and anon, he might well hear  
A sound of music steal in at his ear  
As the wind gave it Being : so sweet an air  
Would strike a Syren mute and ravish her.”

Pourtraying the cell of an Enchantress, he says,

“ About the walls lascivious pictures hung,  
Such as whereof loose Ovid sometimes sung.

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\* Muses Library, 1741. p. 315.

† Bagster's edit. 1808. p. 156. 276.



On either side a crew of dwarfish Elves,  
 Held waxen tapers taller than themselves:  
 Yet so well shap'd unto their little stature,  
 So angel-like in face, so sweet in feature;  
 Their rich attire so diff'ring, yet so well  
 Becoming her that wore it, none could tell  
 Which was the fairest —." \*

Mr. Beloe, in the first volume of his *Anecdotes*, p. 70., has given us a Latin epitaph on a John Chalkhill, copied from Warton's *History of Winchester*. This inscription tells us, that the person whom it commemorates died a Fellow of Winchester College, on the 20th of May, 1679, aged eighty; and yet Mr. Beloe, merely from similarity of name and character, contends that this personage must have been the Chalkhill of Isaac Walton; a supposition which a slight retrospection as to dates, would have proved impossible. Walton, in the title-page of *Thealma and Clearchus*, describes Chalkhill as an acquaintant and friend of Edmund Spenser; now as Spenser died in January, 1598, and the subject of this epitaph, aged 80, in 1679, the latter must consequently have been born in 1599, the year after Spenser's death! The coincidence of character and name is certainly remarkable, but by no means improbable or unexampled.

5. CHAPMAN, GEORGE, who was born in 1557 and died in 1634, aged seventy-seven, is here introduced as the principal translator of his age; to him we are indebted for Homer, Musæus, and part of Hesiod. His first published attempt on Homer appeared in 1592 †, "under the title of *Seaven Bookes of the Shades of Homere, Prince of Poets*;" and shortly after the accession of James the First, the entire *Iliad* was completed and entitled, "*The Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets. Never before in any language truly translated. With a comment upon some of his chief places: done according to the Greeke.*"

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\* *Muses Library*, pp. 317. 319. 327.

† See Beloe's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 83. Ritson has erroneously dated this publication 1598.

This version, which was highly prized by his contemporaries, is executed in rhymed couplets, each line containing fourteen syllables; a species of versification singularly cumbrous and void of harmony; and, notwithstanding this protracted metre, fidelity is, by no means, the characteristic of Chapman. He is not only often very paraphrastic, but takes the liberty of omitting, without notice, what he could not comprehend. It has been asserted by Pope, that a daring fiery spirit, something like what we might imagine Homer himself to have written before he arrived to years of discretion, animates his translation, and covers his defects\*; an opinion which seems rather the result of partiality than unbiassed judgment; for though Chapman is certainly superior to his successor Hobbes, and occasionally exhibits some splendid passages, he must be considered by every critic of the present day as, in general, coarse, bombastic, and often disgusting; a violator, indeed, in almost every page, of the dignity and simplicity of his original.

The magnitude and novelty of the undertaking, however, deserved and met with encouragement, and Chapman was induced, in 1614, to present the world with a version of the *Odyssey*. This is in the pentameter couplet; inferior in vigour to his *Iliad*, but in diction and versification more chaste and natural. Of his *Musæus* and his *Georgics* of Hesiod, we shall only remark that the former was printed in 1616, the latter in 1618, and that the first, which we have alone seen, does not much exceed the character of mediocrity. As an original writer, we shall have to notice Chapman under the dramatic department, and shall merely add now, that he was, in a moral light, a very estimable character, and the friend of Spenser, Shakspeare, Marlowe, Daniel, and Drayton.

6. CHURCHYARD, THOMAS. This author merits notice rather for the quantity than the quality of his productions, though a few of his pieces deserve to be rescued from utter oblivion. He commenced a writer,

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\* Vide Pope's Preface to the *Iliad*; and Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 442, 443.



according to his own account\*, in the reign of King Edward the Sixth, and as Wood informs us that at the age of seventeen he went to seek his fortune at court, and lived four years with Howard Earl of Surry, who died 1546, it is probable that he was born about 1524. Shrewsbury had the honour of producing him, and he continued publishing poetical tracts until the accession of James the First. Ritson has given us a catalogue, which might be enlarged, of seventeen of his publications, with dates, from 1558 to 1599, independent of a variety of scattered pieces; some of these are of such bulk as to include from twelve to twenty subjects, and in framing their titles the old bard seems to have been very partial to alliteration; for we have *Churchyards Chippes*, 1575; *Churchyards Choice*, 1579; *Churchyards Charge*, 1580; *Churchyards Change*; *Churchyards Chance*, 1580; *Churchyards Challenge*, 1593; and *Churchyards Charity*, 1595. † In the "Mirror for Magistrates," first published in 1559, he contributed "*The Legend of Jane Shore*," which he afterwards augmented in his "Challenge," by the addition of twenty-one stanzas; this is perhaps the best of his poetical labours, and contains several good stanzas. His "*Worthiness of Wales*," also, first published in 1587, and reprinted a few years ago, is entitled to preservation. This pains-taking author, as Ritson aptly terms him, died poor on April 4th, 1604, after a daily exertion of his pen, in the service of the Muses, for nearly sixty years.

7. CONSTABLE, HENRY, of whom little more is personally known, than that he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1579 ‡; that he was compelled to leave his native country from a zealous attachment to the Roman Catholic religion, and that, venturing to return, he was imprisoned in the

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\* In his "Challenge," he tells us, that his first publication was "a book named *Davie Dicars Dream*, in King Edward's daies."

† This publication, which was likewise called "A Muscally Consort of heavenly Harmonie," is not mentioned by Ritson.

‡ Vide *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 169.

Tower of London, but released towards the close of 1604.\* Constable possessed unrivalled reputation with his contemporaries as a writer of sonnets; Jonson terms his muse "ambrosiack †;" in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606, we are told that

" Sweet Constable doth take the wondring ear  
And lays it up in willing prisonment;" ‡

and Bolton calls him "a great master in English tongue," and adds, "nor had any gentleman of our nation a more pure, quick, or higher delivery of conceit; witness among all other, that Sonnet of his before his Majesty's Lepanto." § In consequence of these encomia more modern authors have prolonged the note of praise; Wood describes him as "a noted English poet ||;" Hawkins, as the "first, or principal sonneteer of his time ¶," and Warton, as "a noted sonnet-writer." ¹

To justify the reputation thus acquired, we have two collections of his sonnets still existing; one published in 1594, under the title of "Diana, or the excellent conceitful sonnets of H. C. augmented with divers quatorzains of honorable and learned personages, devided into viij Decads;" and the other a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Todd, consisting of sonnets divided into three parts, each part containing three several arguments, and every argument seven sonnets. ²

From the specimens which we have seen of his Diana, and from the sonnet extracted by Mr. Todd from the manuscript collection, there can be little hesitation in declaring, that the reputation which

\* Vide Birch's *Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i.; and Winwood's *Memor.* vol. ii. p. 36.

† Underwood's edit. of 1640, folio, p. 196.

‡ *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i. p. 49. col. 1.

§ *Brydge's Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 268.

|| *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. p. 14.

¶ *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. iii. p. 212.

Warton's *Hist. of English Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 292. note.

² *Todd's Milton*, 2d. edit. vol. vi. p. 439.



Constable once enjoyed, was built upon no stable foundation, and that mediocrity is all which the utmost indulgence of the present age can allow him.

8. DANIEL, SAMUEL, a poet and historian of no small repute, was born near Taunton, in Somersetshire, in 1562. Having received a classical education at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and being afterwards enabled to pursue his studies under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke's family, he became the most correct poet of his age. He commenced author as early as 1585, by a translation of Paulus Jovius's Discourse of rare Inventions; but his first published poems appear to have been his *Delia*, a collection of Sonnets, with the complaint of Rosamond, 1592. He continued to write until nearly the close of his life, for the Second Part of his History of England was published in 1618, and he died on the 14th of October 1619.

Of the poetry of Daniel, omitting for the present all notice of his dramatic works, the most important are his *Sonnets to Delia*, the *History of the Civil War*, the *Complaint of Rosamond* and the *Letter from Octavia to Marcus Antonius*; the remainder consisting of occasional pieces, and principally of Epistles to his friends and patrons.

The Sonnets are not generally constructed on the legitimate or Petrarchan model; but they present us with some beautiful versification and much pleasing imagery. The "Civil Wars between the two houses of Lancaster and York," the first four books of which were published in 1595, and the eighth and last in 1609, form the *magnum opus* of Daniel, and to which he looked for fame with posterity. That he has been disappointed, must be attributed to his having too rigidly adhered to the truth of history; for aspiring rather at the correctness of the annalist than the fancy of the poet, he rarely attempts the elevation of his subject by any flight of imagination, or digressional ornaments. Sound morality, prudential wisdom, and occasional touches of the pathetic, delivered in a style of then unequalled chastity and perspicuity, will be recognised throughout his work; but neither warmth, passion, nor sublimity, nor the most distant trace



of enthusiasm can be found to animate the mass. In the *Complaint of Rosamond*, and in the *Letter from Octavia*, he has copied the manner of Ovid, though with more tenderness and pathos than are usually found in the pages of the Roman.

In short, purity of language, elegance of style, and harmony of versification, together with an almost perfect freedom from pedantry and affectation, and a continual flow of good sense and just reflection, form the merits of Daniel, and resting on these qualities he is entitled to distinguished notice, as an improver of our diction and taste; but to the higher requisites of his art, to the fire and invention of the creative bard, he has few pretensions.

Daniel was the intimate friend of Shakspeare, Marlowe, Chapman, Camden, and Cowel; and was so highly esteemed by the accomplished Anne, Countess of Pembroke, that she not only erected a monument to his memory in Beckington church, Somersetshire, but in a full length of herself, at Appleby Castle in Cumberland, had a small portrait of her favourite poet introduced.\* This partiality seems to have sprung from a connection not often productive of attachment; Daniel had been her tutor when she was only thirteen years old, and in his poems he addresses an epistle to her at this early age, which, as Mr. Park has justly said, "deserves entire perusal for its dignified vein of delicate admonition."† Dissatisfied with the opinions of his contemporaries as to his poetical merit, which appears to have been similar to the estimate that we have just given‡, he relinquished the busy world, and spent the closing years of his life in the cultivation of a farm.

\* Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 328.

† Park's Royal and Noble Authors, vol. iii. p. 167. note.

‡ Thus Drayton speaks of him as

——— "too much historian in verse.

His rhimes were smooth, his metres well did close;

But yet his manner better fitted prose;"

and Bolton describes his works as containing "somewhat a flat, but yet withal a very pure and copious English, and words as warrantable as any man's, and fitter perhaps for prose than measure."



9. DAVIES, SIR JOHN, was born at Chisgrove in Wiltshire in 1570. Though a lawyer of great eminence, he is chiefly known to posterity through the medium of his poetical works. His *Nosce Teipsum*, or poem on the Immortality of the Soul, on which fame rests, was published in 1599, and not only secured him the admiration of his learned contemporaries, among whom may be recorded the great names of Camden, Harrington, Jonson, Selden, and Corbet, but accelerated his professional honours; for being introduced to James in Scotland, in order to congratulate him on his accession to the throne of England, the king, on hearing his name, enquired "if he was *Nosce Teipsum*?" and being answered in the affirmative, graciously embraced him, and took him into such favour, that he soon made him his Solicitor, and then Attorney-General in Ireland.\*

Beside this philosophical poem, the earliest of which our language can boast, Sir John printed, in 1596, a series of Epigrams, which were published at Middleburg, at the close of Marlowe's translation of Ovid's Epistles, and in the same year the first edition of his "Orchestra, or a poeme of dauncing;" these, with twenty-six acrostics on the words Elizabetha Regina, printed in 1599, and entitled "Hymns of Astræa," complete the list of his publications.

His "*Nosce Teipsum*" is a piece of close reasoning in verse, peculiarly harmonious for the period in which it appeared. It possesses, also, wit, ingenuity, vigour and condensation of thought, but exhibits few efforts of imagination, and nothing that is either pathetic or sublime. In point of argument, metaphysical acuteness and legitimate deduction, the English poet is, in every respect, superior to his classical model Lucretius; but how greatly does he fall beneath the fervid genius and creative fancy of the Latian bard!

Sir John died suddenly on the 7th of December 1626, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

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\* Brydges's *Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 273.

10. DAVORS, JOHN. Of this poet little more is known, than that he published, in 1613, the following work: "The Secrets of Angling: teaching the choicest Toolles, Baits, and Seasons, for the taking of any Fish, in Pond or River: practised and familiarly opened in three Bookes." 12mo.

Upon a subject so technical and didactic, few opportunities for poetical imagery might naturally be expected; but Davors has most happily availed himself of those which occurred, and has rendered his poem, in many places, highly interesting by beauty of sentiment, and warmth of description. A lovely specimen of his powers may be found in the "Complete Angler" of Isaac Walton \*, and the following invocation, from the opening of the First Book, shall be given as a further proof of the genuineness of his inspiration, and with this additional remark, that his versification is throughout singularly harmonious:—

" You Nymphs that in the springs and waters sweet,  
Your dwelling have, of every hill and dale,  
And oft amidst the meadows green do meet  
To sport and play, and hear the nightingale,  
And in the rivers fresh do wash you feet,  
While Progne's sister tels her wofull tale:  
Such ayd and power unto my verses lend,  
As may suffice this little worke to end.

And thou, sweet Boyd, that with thy wat'ry sway  
Dost wash the Clifffes of Deignton and of Week,  
And through their rocks with crooked winding way,  
Thy mother Avon runnest soft to seek;  
In whose fair streams, the speckled trout doth play,  
The roch, the dace, the gudgin, and the bleike:  
Teach me the skill with slender line and hook  
To take each fish of river, pond, and brook."

A second edition of "The Secrets of Angling," "augmented with many approved experiments," by W. Lawson, was printed in 1652, and a third would be acceptable even in the present day.

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\* Vide Bagster's edit. p. 128.



11. **DONNE, JOHN, D.D.** The greater part of the poetry of this prelate, though not published, was written, according to Ben Jonson, before he was twenty-five years of age; and as he was born in London in 1573, he must consequently be ranked as a bard of the sixteenth century. His poems consist of elegies, satires, letters, epigrams, divine poems, and miscellaneous pieces, and procured for him, among his contemporaries, through private circulation and with the public when printed, during the greater part of the seventeenth century, an extraordinary share of reputation. A more refined age, however, and a more chastised taste, have very justly consigned his poetical labours to the shelf of the philologer. A total want of harmony in versification, and a total want of simplicity both in thought and expression, are the vital defects of Donne. Wit he has in abundance, and even erudition, but they are miserably misplaced; and even his amatory pieces exhibit little else than cold conceits and metaphysical subtleties. He may be considered as one of the principal establishers of a school of poetry founded on the worst Italian model, commencing towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, continued to the decease of Charles the Second, and including among its most brilliant cultivators the once popular names of Crashaw, Cleveland, Cowley, and Sprat.

Dr. Donne died in March 1631, and the first edition of his poems was published by his son two years after that event.

12. **DRAYTON, MICHAEL**, of an ancient family in Leicestershire, was born in the village of Harshul, in the parish of Atherston, in Warwickshire, in 1563. This voluminous and once highly-popular poet has gradually sunk into a state of undeserved oblivion, from which he can alone be extricated by a judicious selection from his numerous works. These may be classed under the heads of *historical, topographical, epistolary, pastoral, and miscellaneous* poetry. The first includes his *Barons Warres*, first published in 1596 under the title of "Mortimeriades; the lamentable Civil Warres of Edward the Second, and the Barons;" his *Legends*, written before 1598 and printed in an octavo edition of his poems in 1613, and his *Battle of Agincourt*. It cannot be denied that in these pieces there are occasional gleams of



imagination, many just reflections, and many laboured descriptions, delivered in perspicuous language, and generally in smooth versification ; but they do not interest the heart or elevate the fancy ; they are tediously and minutely historical, void of passion, and, for the most part, languid and prosaic. The second department exhibits the work on which he rested his hopes of immortality, the elaborate and highly-finished *Poly-olbion*, of which the first eighteen songs made their appearance in 1612, accompanied by the very erudite notes of Selden, and the whole was completed in thirty parts in 1622. The chief defect in this singular poem results from its plan ; to describe the woods, mountains, vallies, and rivers of a country, with all their associations, traditionary, historical, and antiquarian, forms a task which no genius, however exalted, could mould into an interesting whole, and the attempt to enliven it by continued personification has only proved an expedient which still further taxes the patience of the reader. It possesses, however, many beauties which are poetically great ; numerous delineations which are graphically correct, and a fidelity with regard to its materials so unquestioned, as to have merited the reference of Hearne and Wood, and the praise of Gough, who tells us that the *Poly-olbion* has preserved many circumstances which even Camden has omitted. It is a poem, in short, which will always be consulted rather for the information that it conveys, than for the pleasure that it produces.

To *England's Heroical Epistles*, which constitute the third class, not much praise can now be allotted, notwithstanding they were once the most admired of the author's works. Occasional passages may, it is true, be selected, which merit approbation for novelty of imagery and beauty of expression ; but nothing can atone for their wanting what, from the nature of the subjects chosen, should have been their leading characteristic,—pathos.

It is chiefly as a *pastoral* poet that Drayton will live in the memory of his countrymen. The shepherd's reed was an early favourite ; for in 1593 he published his “ *Idea : the Shepherd's Garland*, fashioned in nine Eglogs : and Rowland's Sacrifice to the nine Muses,” which



were reprinted under the title of Pastorals, and with the addition of a tenth eclogue. His attachment to rural imagery was nearly as durable as his existence; for the year previous to his death he brought forward another collection of pastorals, under the title of *The Muses Elisium*. Of these publications, the first is in every respect superior, and gives the author a very high rank among rural bards; his descriptions are evidently drawn from nature; they often possess a decided originality, and are couched in language pure and unaffected, and of the most captivating simplicity.

The *miscellaneous* productions of Drayton include a vast variety of pieces; odes, elegies, sonnets, religious effusions, &c. &c. To specify the individual merit of these would be useless; but among them are two which, from their peculiar value, call for appropriate notice. A most playful and luxuriant imagination is displayed to much advantage in the *Nymphidia*, or *The Court of Fairy*, and an equal degree of judgment, together with a large share of interest, in the poem addressed to his loved friend Henry Reynolds, *On Poets and Poesy*. These, with the first collection of pastorals, part of the second, and some well-chosen extracts from his bulkier works, would form a most fascinating little volume. Drayton died on December 23. 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

13. DRUMMOND, WILLIAM. The birth of this truly elegant poet is placed at Hawthornden in Scotland, on the 13th of December, 1585, and the publication of the first portion of his Sonnets, in 1616, entitles him to due notice among these critical sketches.

A disappointment of the most afflictive nature, for death snatched from him the object of his affection almost immediately after she had consented to be his, has given a peculiar and very pathetic interest to the greater part of his poetical compositions, which are endeared to the reader of sensibility by the charm resulting from a sincere and never-dying regret for the memory of his earliest love.

His poetry, which has never yet been properly arranged, consists principally of poems of a lyrical cast, including sonnets, madrigals, epigrams, epitaphs, miscellanies, and divine poems.



Of these classes, the first and second exhibit numerous instances of a versification decidedly more polished and elegant than that of any of his contemporaries, and to this technical merit is frequently to be added the still more rare and valuable distinctions of beauty of expression, simplicity of thought, delicacy of sentiment, and tenderness of feeling. Where he has failed, his faults are to be attributed to the then prevailing taste for Italian *concetti*; to the study of Marino, and his French imitators, Bellây and Du Bartas. These deviations from correct taste are, however, neither frequent nor flagrant, and are richly atoned for by strains of native genius, and the felicities of unaffected diction. \*

Drummond was the intimate friend of Drayton, the Earl of Stirling, and Ben Jonson; the latter holding him in such estimation as to undertake a journey to Scotland on foot, solely for the purpose of enjoying his company and conversation. How far this meeting contributed to enhance their mutual regard, is doubtful; no two characters could be more opposed, the roughness and asperity of Jonson ill according with the elegant manners of the Scottish poet, whose manuscript memoranda relative to this interview plainly intimate his disapprobation of the disposition and habits of his celebrated guest; but, unfortunately, at the same time, display a breach of confidence, and a fastidiousness of temper, which throw a shade over the integrity of his own friendship, and the rectitude of his own feelings.

This accomplished bard died on the 4th of December 1649, aged sixty-three, and though his poems were republished by Phillips, the nephew of Milton, in 1656, with a high encomium on his genius, he continued so obscure, that in 1675, when the *Theatrum Poetarum* of the same critic appeared, he is said to be "utterly disregarded and laid aside †;" a fate which, strange as it may seem, has, until these few

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\* Lord Woodhouslee, speaking of our author's poem entitled, *Forth Feasting*, observes that it "attracted the envy as well as the praise of Ben Jonson, is superior, in harmony of numbers, to any of the compositions of the contemporary poets of England; and is, in its subject, one of the most elegant panegyrics that ever were addressed by a poet to a prince." — *Life of Lord Kaimes*.

† *Theatrum Poetarum*, p. 195. original edition.



years, almost completely veiled the merit of one of the first poets of the sister kingdom.

14. FAIREFAX, EDWARD. The singular beauty of this gentleman's translation of Tasso, and its influence on English versification, demand a greater share of notice than is due to any poetical version preceding that of Pope. He was the son of Sir Thomas Fairefax, of Denton in Yorkshire, and early cultivating the enjoyment of rural and domestic life, retired with the object of his affections to Newhall, in the parish of Fuyistone, in Knaresborough forest, where he usefully occupied his time in the education of his children, and the indulgence of literary pursuits. His "Godfrey of Bulloigne," the work which has immortalised his name, was written whilst he was very young, was published in 1600, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.

This masterly version, which for the last half century has been most undeservedly neglected, has not hitherto been superseded by any posterior attempt. Though rendered line by line, and in the octave stanza of the Italians, it possesses an uncommon share of elegance, vigour, and spirit, and very frequently exhibits the facility and raciness of original composition. That it contributed essentially towards the improvement of our versification, may be proved from the testimony of Dryden and Waller, the former declaring him superior in harmony even to Spenser, and the latter confessing that he owed the melody of his numbers to a studious imitation of his metrical skill.\*

It is greatly to be regretted that the original poetry of Fairefax, with the exception of one piece, has been suffered to perish. It consisted

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\* Dr. Johnson was of opinion that the translation of Mr. Hoole would entirely supersede the labours of Fairefax. With no discriminating judge of poetry, however, will this ever be the case; there is a tameness and mediocrity in the version of Mr. Hoole, which must always place it far beneath the spirited copy of the elder bard. Had Mr. Brookes completed the Jerusalem with the same harmony and vigour which he has exhibited in the first three books, a desideratum in English literature had been supplied, and the immortal poem of Tasso had appeared clothed in diction and numbers worthy of the most polished era of our poetry.

of a poetical history of the Black Prince, and twelve Eclogues, of which the fourth is preserved by Mrs. Cooper in her Muses' Library. This lady informs us that the eclogues were all written after the accession of King James to the throne of England; that they were occupied by "important subjects relating to the manners, characters, and incidents of the times he lived in; that they were pointed with many fine strokes of satire; dignified with wholesome lessons of morality, and policy, to those of the highest rank; and some modest hints even to Majesty itself;" and that the learning they contained was "so various and extensive, that, according to the evidence of his son, (who has written large Annotations on each,) no man's reading, beside his own, was sufficient to explain his references effectually." \*

Fairefax died about the year 1632; and, beside his poetical works, was the author of several controversial pieces, and of a learned essay on Demonology.

15. FITZGEFFREY, CHARLES, was a native of Cornwall, of a genteel family, and was entered a commoner of Broadgate's hall, Oxford, in 1592. Having taken his degrees in arts, and assumed the clerical profession, he finally became rector of St. Dominic in his own county. In 1596, he published a poem to the memory of Sir Francis Drake, entitled "Sir Francis Drake his honorable Life's commendation; and his tragicall Deathe's lamentation;" 12mo. This poem, which possesses no small portion of merit, is dedicated, in a sonnet, "to the beauteous and vertuous Lady Elizabeth, late wife unto the highlie renowned Sir Francis Drake, deceased," and is highly spoken of by Browne and Meres; the former declaring that he unfolded

"The tragedie of Drake in leaves of gold;" †

and the latter asserting that "as C. Plinius wrote the life of Pomponius secundus, so yong Cha. Fitz-Geffray, that high-touring falcon,

\* Muses Library, 1741. p. 363.

† Chalmers's English Poets, vol. vi. p. 295. col. 2.



hath most gloriously penned the honourable life and death of worthy Sir Francis Drake.”\*

As the poetry of Fitzgeffrey is very little known, we shall give the Sonnet to Lady Drake as a pleasing specimen of his genius :

“ Divorc’d by Death, but wedded still by Love,  
 For Love by Death can never be divorc’d;  
 Loe ! England’s dragon, thy true turtle dove,  
 To seeke his make is now againe enforc’d.  
 Like as the sparrow from the kestrel’s ire,  
 Made his asylum in the wise man’s fist:  
 So, he and I, his tongues-man, do require  
 Thy sanctuary, envie to resist.  
 So may heroique Drake, whose worth gave wings  
 Unto my Muse, that nere before could fly,  
 And taught her tune these harsh discordant strings  
 A note above her rurall minstrelsy,  
 Live in himselfe, and I in him may live;  
 Thine eyes to both vitality shall give.”†

Beside his volume on Drake, Fitzgeffrey was the author of a collection of Latin epigrams, in three books, under the title of *Affaniæ*, printed in 8vo., 1601, and of a religious poem, called “ The Blessed Birth-day,” 1634, 4to. He lived highly respected both as a poet and divine, and died at his parsonage-house in 1636-7.

16. FLETCHER, GILES, the elder brother of Phineas Fletcher, was born in 1588, took the degree of bachelor of divinity at Oxford, and died at his rectory of Alderton, in Suffolk, in 1623. The production which has given him a poet’s fame, was published in 1610, under the title of “ Christ’s Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death,” Cambridge, 4to. It is written in stanzas of eight lines, and divided into four parts, under the appellations of *Christs Victory in Heaven*, his *Triumph on Earth*, his *Triumph over Death*, and his *Triumph after Death*.

This is a poem which exhibits strong powers of description, and a

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\* *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 53.

† *Vide British Bibliographer*, No. VII. p. 118.

great command of language; it is, however, occasionally sullied by conceits, and by a frequent play upon words, of which the initial stanza is a striking proof. Our author was an ardent admirer of Spenser, and has in many instances successfully imitated his picturesque mode of delineation, though he has avoided following him in the use of the prosopopeia.

17. FLETCHER, PHINEAS, who surpassed his brother in poetical genius, took his bachelor's degree at King's College, Cambridge, in 1604, and his master's degree in 1608. Though his poems were not published until 1633, there is convincing proof that they were written before 1610; for Giles, at the close of his "Christ's Victory," printed in this year, thus beautifully alludes not only to his brother's Purple Island, but to his eclogues, as previous compositions:—

" But let the Kentish lad; that lately taught  
His *oaten reed* the trumpets silver sound,  
Young *Thyrsilis*; and for his music brought  
The willing spheres from Heav'n, to lead around  
The dancing nymphs and swains, that sung, and crown'd  
Eclectas Hymen with ten thousand flowers  
Of choicest praise, and hung her heav'nly bow'rs  
With saffron garlands, dress'd for nuptial paramours:  
Let his shrill trumpet, with her silver blast  
Of fair Eclecta, and her spousal bed,  
Be the sweet pipe, and smooth encomiast:  
But my green Muse, hiding her younger head,  
Under old Camus's flaggy banks, that spread  
Their willow locks abroad, and all the day  
With their own wa'try shadows wanton play:  
Dares not those high amours, and love-sick songs assay."\*

It is, indeed, highly probable, that they were composed even before he took his bachelor's degree; for, in the dedication of his "Purple Island" to his learned friend, Edward Benlowes, Esq., he terms them "raw essays of my very unripe years, and almost childhood."†

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\* Chalmers's English Poets, vol. vi. p. 79. col. 2.

† Ibid. vol. vi. p. 81.



The "Purple Island" is an allegorical description, in twelve cantos, of the corporeal and intellectual functions of man. Its interest and effect have been greatly injured by a too minute investigation of anatomical facts; the first five cantos being little else than a lecture in rime, and productive more of disgust than any other sensation. In the residue of the poem, the bard bursts forth with unshackled splendour, and the passions and mental powers are personified with great brilliancy of imagination, and great warmth of colouring. Like his brother, however, he is defective in taste; the great charm of composition, simplicity, is too often lost amid the mazes of quaint conception and meretricious ornament. Yet are there passages interspersed through this allegory, of exquisite tenderness and sweetness, alike simple and correct in diction, chaste in creative power, and melodious in versification.

The "Piscatory Eclogues," to novelty of scenery, add many passages of genuine and delightful poetry, and the music of the verse is often highly gratifying to the ear; but many of the same faults are discernible in these pieces, which we remarked in the "Purple Island;" pedantry and forced conceits occasionally intrude, and, though the poet has not injured the effect of his delineations by coarseness, or rusticity of expression, he has sometimes forgotten the simple elegance which should designate the pastoral muse.

Our author was presented to the living of Hilgay, in Norfolk, in 1621, and died there about the year 1650.

18. GASCOIGNE, GEORGE, the son of Sir John Gascoigne, was descended from an ancient family in Essex, and, after a private education under the care of Stephen Nevinson, L.L.D. he was sent to Cambridge, and from thence to Gray's Inn, for the purpose of studying the law. Like many men, however, of warm passions and strong imagination, he neglected his profession for the amusements and dissipation of a court, and having exhausted his paternal property, he found himself under the necessity of seeking abroad, in a military capacity, that support which he had failed to acquire at home. He accordingly accepted a Captain's commission in Holland, in 1572,

under William Prince of Orange, and having signalised his courage at the siege of Middleburg, had the misfortune to be captured by the Spaniards near Leyden, and, after four month's imprisonment, revisited his native country.

He now resumed his profession and his apartments at Gray's Inn; but in 1575, on his return from accompanying Queen Elizabeth in her progress to Kenelworth Castle, he fixed his residence at his "poore house," at Walthamstow, where he employed himself in collecting and publishing his poems. He was not long destined, however, to enjoy this literary leisure; for, according to George Whetstone, who was "an eye-witness of his godly and charitable end in this world \*," he expired at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, on the 7th of October, 1577, when he was probably under forty years of age. †

The poetry of Gascoigne was twice collected during his life-time; firstly, in 1572, in a quarto volume, entitled, "A Hundreth sundrie Flowres bounde up in one small Poesie. Gathered partely (by translation) in the fyne outlandish Gardins of Euripides, Ovid, Petrarke, Ariosto, and others: and partly by invention, out of our owne fruitefull Orchardes in Englande: Yielding sundrie sweet savors of

\* Whetstone published a pamphlet, entitled, "A Remembrance of the wel imployed life and godly end of George Gaskoigne Esquire, who deceased at Stalmford in Lincolne Shire, the 7th of October 1577. The reporte of George Whetstone Gent. an eye witness of his Godly and charitable end in this world. *Formæ nulla Fides*. Imprinted At London for Edward Aggas, dwelling in Pauls Churchyard and are there to be solde." "Since the antiquities of poetry," observes Mr. Chalmers, "have become a favourite study, many painful inquiries have been made after this tract, but it could not be found in Tanner's Library, which forms part of the Bodleian, or in any other collection, private or public, and doubts were entertained whether such a pamphlet had ever existed. About three years ago, however, it was discovered in the collection of a deceased gentleman, a Mr. Voight, of the Custom-house, London, and was purchased at his sale by Mr. Malone. It consists of about thirteen pages small quarto, black letter, and contains, certainly not much *life*, but some particulars unknown to his biographers."—English Poets, vol. ii. p. 447, 448.

† For further particulars of his life see Chalmers's English Poets, vol. ii. p. 447. et seq., *Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 110., and British Bibliographer, vol. i. 73.



Tragical, Comical, and Morall Discourses, both pleasaunt and profitable to the well smellyng noses of learned Readers. Meritum petere, grave. At London, Imprinted for Richarde Smith ;” and secondly in 1575, with the title of “The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire. Corrected, perfected and augmented by the Authour. *Tam Marti, quam Mercurio*. Imprinted at London by H. Bynneman for Richard Smith.” The edition is divided into three parts, under the appellation of *Flowers*, *Hearbes*, and *Weedes*, to which are annexed “Certayne notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English, written at the request of Master Edouardo Donati.”

Besides these collections, Gascoigne published separately, “The Glasse of Government. A Tragical Comedie,” 1575. “The Steele Glas. A Satyre,” 1576. “The Princely Pleasures, at the Court at Kenelworth,” 1576; and “A Delicate Diet for daintie mouthde Drunkards,” a prose tract, 1576. After his death appeared, in 1586, his tract, entitled, “The Droome of Doomes Day;” and in 1587, was given to the world, a complete edition of his works, in small quarto, black letter.

Gascoigne, though patronised by several illustrious characters, among whom may be enumerated, Lord Grey of Wilton, the Earl of Bedford, and Sir Walter Raleigh, appears to have suffered so much from the envy and malignity of his critics, as to induce him to intimate, that the disease of which he died, was occasioned by the irritability of mind resulting from these attacks; and yet, as far as we have an opportunity of judging, his contemporaries seem to have done justice to his talents; at least Gabriel Harvey\* and Arthur Hall†, Nash‡, Webbe||, and Puttenham§, have together praised him for his wit, his imagination, and his metre; and in the Glosse

\* Gratulationes Valdinenses, edit. Binneman, 1578, 4to. lib. iv. p. 22.

† In his Dedication prefixed to his Translation of Ten Books of Homer.

‡ In his Address to Gentlemen Students, prefixed to Green's Arcadia.

§ Discourse of English Poetrie, 1586.

|| Arte of Poesie, 1589, reprint, p. 51.

to Spenser's Calender, he is styled "the very chief of our late rymers."\*

The poetry of our author has not, in modern times, met with all the attention which it deserves; specimens, it is true, have been selected by Cooper, Percy, Warton, Headley, Ellis, Brydges, and Haslewood; but, with the exception of the re-impression of 1810, in Mr. Chalmers's English Poets, no edition of his works has been published since 1587. This is the more extraordinary, for, as the ingenious editor just mentioned has remarked, "there are three respects in which his claims to originality require to be noticed as æras in a history of poetry. His Steele Glass is among the first specimens of blank verse in our language; his *Jocasta* is the second theatrical piece written in that measure; and his *Supposes* is the first comedy written in prose."† Warton has pronounced him to have "much exceeded all the poets of his age in smoothness and harmony of versification‡, an encomium which peculiarly applies to the lyrical portion of his works, which is indeed exquisitely polished, though not altogether free from affectation and antithesis. Among these pieces, too, is to be discovered a considerable range of fancy, much tenderness and glow of sentiment, and a frequent felicity of expression. In moral and didactic poetry, he has likewise afforded us proofs approaching to excellence, and his satire entitled "*The Steele Glass*," includes a curious and minute picture of the manners and customs of the age.

To the "*Supposes*" of Gascoigne, a translation from the *Suppositi* of Ariosto, executed with peculiar neatness and ease, Shakspeare has been indebted for a part of his plot of the "*Taming of the Shrew*."§

19. GREENE, ROBERT. Of this ingenious and prolific writer, we

\* Todd's Spenser, vol. i. p. 191. Glosse to November.

† Chalmers's English Poets, vol. ii. p. 455.

‡ Observations on the Fairy Queen, vol. ii. p. 168.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. ix. p. 144. note 4.



have already related so many particulars, that nothing more can be wanting here, than a brief character of his poetical genius. Were his poetry collected from his various pamphlets and plays, of which nearly fifty are known to be extant, a most interesting little volume might be formed. The extreme rarity, however, of his productions, may render this an object of no easy attainment; but of its effect a pretty accurate idea may be acquired from what has been done by Mr. Beloe, who, in his *Anecdotes of Literature*, has collected many beautiful specimens from the following pieces of our author. *Tullie's Love*, 1616; *Penelope's Web*, 1601; *Farewell to Follie*, 1617; *Never Too Late*, 1590; *History of Arbasto*, 1617; *Arcadia, or Menaphor*, 1589; *Orphanion*, 1599; *Philomela*, 1592. \*

Though most of the productions of Greene were written to supply the wants of the passing hour, yet the poetical effusions scattered through his works betray few marks of haste or slovenliness, and many of them, indeed, may be classed among the most polished and elegant of their day. To much warmth and fertility of fancy, they add a noble strain of feeling and enthusiasm, together with many exquisite touches of the pathetic, and so many impressive lessons of morality, as, in a great measure, to atone for the licentiousness of several of his prose tracts. †

20. HALL, JOSEPH, Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, was born on the first of July 1574, at Brestow Park, Leicestershire. He was admitted of Emanuel College, Cambridge, at the age of fifteen, and when twenty-three years old, published his satires, under the title of *Virgidemiarum, Sixe Bookes*. First Three Bookes of Tooth-less Satyrs: 1. Poetical; 2. Academicall; 3. Moral; printed by T. Creede for R. Dexter 1597. The Three last Bookes of Byting Satyrs, by

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\* Beloe's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 191. et seq.; and vol. vi. p. 1. 21.

† The reprint which has just appeared of our author's *Philomela*, is a proof, however, that his prose was occasionally the medium of sound instruction; for the moral of this piece is unexceptionable. We may also remark, that the confessions wrung from him in the hour of repentance are highly monitory, and calculated to make the most powerful and salutary impression.

R. Bradock for Dexter, 1598. Both parts were reprinted together in 1599, and have conferred upon their author a just claim to the appellation of one of our earliest and best satiric poets. Of the legitimate satire, indeed, he appears to have given us the first example, an honour upon which he justly prides himself, for, in the opening of his prologue, he tells us

“ I first adventure, with fool-hardy might,  
To tread the steps of perilous despight:  
I first adventure, follow me who list,  
And be the *second* English satirist.”

On the re-publication of the *Virgidemiarum* at Oxford, in 1752, Gray, in a letter to Dr. Wharton, speaking of these satires, says, “ they are full of spirit and poetry, as much of the first as Dr. Donne, and far more of the latter \*;” and Warton, at the commencement of an elaborate and extended critique on Hall’s poetic genius, in the Fragment of his fourth volume of the *History of English Poetry*, gives the following very discriminative character of these satires. They “ are marked,” he observes, “ with a classical precision, to which English poetry had yet rarely attained. They are replete with animation of style and sentiment. The indignation of the satirist is always the result of good sense. Nor are the thorns of severe invective unmixed with the flowers of pure poetry. The characters are delineated in strong and lively colouring, and their discriminations are touched with the masterly traces of genuine humour. The versification is equally energetic and elegant, and the fabric of the couplets approaches to the modern standard. It is no inconsiderable proof of a genius predominating over the general taste of an age when every preacher was a punster, to have written verses, where laughter was to be raised, and the reader to be entertained with sallies of pleasantry, without quibbles and conceits. His chief fault is obscurity, arising from a remote phraseology, constrained

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\* Mason’s Gray, p. 224.



combinations, unfamiliar allusions, elliptical apostrophes, and abruptness of expression. Perhaps some will think that his manner betrays too much of the laborious exactness and pedantic anxiety of the scholar and the student. Ariosto in Italian, and Regnier in French, were now almost the only modern writers of satire; and I believe there had been an English translation of Ariosto's Satires. But Hall's acknowledged patterns are Juvenal and Persius, not without some touches of the urbanity of Horace. His parodies of these poets, or rather his adaptations of ancient to modern manners, a mode of imitation not unhappily practised by Oldham, Rochester, and Pope, discover great facility and dexterity of invention. The moral gravity and the censorial declamation of Juvenal, he frequently enlivens with a train of more refined reflection, or adorns with a novelty and variety of images." \*

The Satires of Hall exhibit a very minute and curious picture of the literature and manners, the follies and vices of his times, and numerous quotations in the course of our work will amply prove the wit, the sagacity, and the elegance of his Muse. Poetry was the occupation merely of his youth, the vigour and decline of his days being employed in the composition of professional works, calculated, by their piety, eloquence, and originality, to promote, in the most powerful manner, the best interests of morality and religion. This great and good man died, after a series of persecution from the republican party, at his little estate at Heigham, near Norwich, on the 8th of September 1656, and in the eighty-second year of his age.

21. HARRINGTON, SIR JOHN. Among the numerous translators of the Elizabethan period, this gentleman merits peculiar notice, as having, through the medium of his Ariosto, "enriched our poetry by a communication of new stores of fiction and imagination, both of the romantic and comic species, of Gothic machinery and familiar manners." † His version of the Orlando Furioso, of which the first

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\* Vide Chalmers's English Poets, vol. v. p. 226.

† Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. iii. p. 485.

edition was published in 1591, procured him a large share of celebrity. Stowe, in his *Annals*, has classed him among those excellent poets which worthily flourish, in their own works, and lived together in Queen Elizabeth's reign \*; and Fuller †, Philips, Dryden, and others, to the middle of the eighteenth century, have spoken of him in terms of similar commendation. In point of poetical execution, however, his translation, whatever might be its incidental operation on our poetic literature, must now be considered as vulgar, tame, and inaccurate. Sir John was born at Kelston near Bath, in 1561, and died there in 1612, aged fifty-one. His "Epigrams," in four Books, were published after his death; first in 1615, when the fourth book alone was printed; again in 1618, including the whole collection; and a third time in 1625, small 8vo. ‡ The poetical merit of these pieces is very trifling, but they throw light upon contemporary character and manners. §

22. JONSON, BENJAMIN. Of this celebrated poet, the friend and companion of Shakspeare, a very brief notice, and limited to his

\* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, apud Park, vol. i. p. xxii.

† This writer terms Sir John "one of the most ingenious poets of our English nation," and says "he was a Poet in all things, save in his wealth, leaving a fair estate to a learned and religious son." — *Worthies*, part iii. p. 28.

‡ They were also annexed to the third edition of the Translation of "*Orlando Furioso*," fol. 1634.

§ The popularity of these epigrams, notwithstanding their poetical mediocrity, may be estimated from the opinion of the publisher of the edition of 1625. "If in poetry," he remarks, "heraldry were admitted, he would be found in happiness of wit near allied to the great Sidney: yet but near; for the Apex of the Cœlum Empyrium is not more inaccessible, than is the height of Sidney's poesy, which by imagination we may approach, by imitation never attain to." — Dedication to George Villiers Duke of Buckingham.

A subsequent writer has also gifted them with extraordinary longevity: —

" Still lives the Muse's Apollonian son,  
The Phoenix of his age, rare HARINGTON!  
Whose *Epigrams*, when time shall be no more,  
May die, perhaps, but never can before."

Beedome's Poems, 1641.

Vide *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. p. xxiii.



minor pieces, will here be necessary, as his dramatic works and some circumstances of his life, will hereafter occupy their due share of attention. His poems were divided by himself into "Epigrams," "The Forest," "Under-woods," and a translation of "Horace's Art of Poetrie;" to which his late editors have added, "Miscellaneous Pieces." The *general* cast of these poems is not such as will recommend them to a modern ear; they are but too often cold and affected; but occasionally, instances of a description the very reverse of these epithets, are to be found, where simplicity and beauty of expression constitute the prominent features. It is chiefly, if not altogether, among his minor pieces in the lyric measure that we meet with this peculiar neatness and concinnity of diction: thus, in "The Forest," the lines from Catullus, beginning "Come, my Celia, let us prove," and the well-known song

" Drink to me only with thine eyes;"

in the "Underwoods," the stanzas commencing

" For Love's sake kisse me once again;"

" Or scorne, or pittie on me take;"

and, among his "Songs," these with the initial lines

" Queene and huntresse, chaste and faire;"

" Still to be neat, still to be drest;"

are striking proofs of these excellencies.

We must also remark that, among his "Epistles" and Miscellaneous Pieces," there are discoverable a few very conspicuous examples of the union of correct and nervous sentiment with singular force and dignity of elocution. Of this happy combination, the Lines to the Memory of Shakspeare, an eulogium which will claim our attention in a future page, may be quoted as a brilliant model.

23. LODGE, THOMAS, M. D. This gentleman, though possessing celebrity, in his day, as a physician, is chiefly entitled to the attention of posterity as a poet. He was a native of Lincolnshire, and born about 1556; educated at Oxford, of which he became a member about 1573, and died of the plague at London, in September 1625. He has the double honour of being the first who published, in our language, a Collection of Satires, so named, and of having suggested to Shakspeare the plot of his *As You Like It*. Philips, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, characterises him as “one of the writers of those pretty old pastoral songs, which were very much the strain of those times\* ;” but has strangely overlooked his satirical powers; these, however, have been noticed by Meres, who remarks, that “as Horace, Lucilius, Juvenal, Persius and Lucullus are the best for Satyre among the Latins, so with us in the same faculty, these are chiefe: Piers Plowman, LODGE, Hall of Emanuel Colledge in Cambridge, the author of *Pigmalion’s Image*, &c.† The work which gives him precedence, as a writer of professed satires, is entitled “*A FIG FOR MOMUS; containing pleasant Varietie, included in Satyrs, Eclogues, and Epistles, by T. L. of Lincolnes Inne, Gent.*” 1595.‡ It is dedicated to “William, Earle of Darbie,” and though published two years before the appearance of Hall’s Satires, possesses a spirit, ease and harmony, which that more celebrated poet has not surpassed. Than the following lines, selected from the first satire, we know few which, in the same department, can establish a better claim to vigour, truth, and melody:—

“ All men are willing with the world to haulte,  
But no man takes delight to knowe his faulte—  
Tell bleer-eid Linus that his sight is cleere,  
Heele pawne himselfe to buy thee bread and beere;—  
Find me a niggard that doth want the shift  
To call his cursed avarice good thrift;

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\* Edition of 1800, by Sir Egerton Brydges, p. 197, 198.

† Vide Beloe’s *Anecdotes of Literature*, vol. ii. p. 114.

‡ Ibid. p. 115.



A rakehell sworne to prodigallitie,  
 That dares not terme it liberalitie;  
 A lecher that hath lost both flesh and fame,  
 That holds not lecherie a pleasant game: —  
 Thus with the world, the world dissembles still,  
 And to their own confusions follow will,  
 Holding it true felicitie to flie,  
 Not from the sinne, but from the seeing eie.” \*

The debt of Shakspeare to our author is to be found in a pamphlet entitled “*Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie*, found after his Death in his Cell at Silexdra, by T. L. Gent.” The poetical pieces interspersed through this tract correspond with the character given of Lodge’s composition by Phillips; for they are truly pastoral, and are finished in a style of great sweetness, delicacy, and feeling. Want of taste, or want of intimacy with this production, has induced Mr. Steevens to give a very improper estimate of it; “Shakspeare,” he remarks, “has followed Lodge’s novel more exactly than is his general custom when he is indebted to such *worthless* originals; and has sketched some of his principal characters, and borrowed a few expressions from it.” †

The poetry of Lodge is to be gleaned from his pamphlets; particularly from the two which we have mentioned, and from the two now to be enumerated, namely, “*Phillis: honoured with pastorall sonnets, elegies and amorous delights*. Where-unto is annexed, the tragick complaynt of Elstred,” 1593, 4to., and “*A most pleasant historie of Glaucus and Scilla: with many excellent poems, and delectable sonnets*,” 1610, 4to. He contributed, likewise, to the Collections termed *The Phoenix Nest*, 1593, and *England’s Helicon*, 1600; and in the Preface, by Sir Egerton Brydges, to the third edition of the latter Miscellany, so just a tribute is paid to his genius as imperatively demands insertion; more particularly if we consider the obscurity into which this poet has fallen. “In ancient writings,”

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\* Vide Beloe on Scarce Books, vol. ii. pp. 115—117.

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. viii. p. 3.

observes the critic, "we frequently meet with beautiful passages ; but whole compositions are seldom free from the most striking inequalities ; from inharmonious verses ; from lame, or laboured and quaint expressions ; and creeping or obscure thoughts. In Lodge we find whole pastorals and odes, which have all the ease, polish, and elegance of a modern author. How natural is the sentiment, and how sweet the expression of the following in *Old Damon's Pastoral* :

" Homely hearts do harbour quiet ;  
 Little fear, and mickle solace ;  
 States suspect their bed and diet ;  
 Fear and craft do haunt the palace.  
 Little would I, little want I,  
 Where the mind and store agreeth ;  
 Smallest comfort is not scanty ;  
 Least he longs that little seeth.  
 Time hath been that I have longed,  
 Foolish I to like of folly,  
 To converse where honour thronged,  
 To my pleasures linked wholly :  
 Now I see, and seeing sorrow  
 That the day consum'd returns not :  
 Who dare trust upon to-morrow,  
 When nor time nor life sojourns not !"

" How charmingly he breaks out in *The Solitary Shepherd's Song* : —

" O shady vale, O fair enriched meads,  
 O sacred flowers, sweet fields, and rising mountains ;  
 O painted flowers, green herbs where Flora treads,  
 Refresh'd by wanton winds and watry fountains !"

" Is there one word or even accent obsolete in this picturesque and truly poetical stanza ?

" But if such a tender and moral fancy be ever allowed to trifle, is there any thing of the same kind in the whole compass of English poetry more exquisite, more delicately imagined, or expressed with more finished and happy artifice of language, than Rosalind's Madrigal, beginning —



" Love in my bosom, like a bee,  
 Doth suck his sweet :  
 Now with his wings he plays with me,  
 Now with his feet.  
 Within mine eyes he makes his rest ;  
 His bed amidst my tender breast ;  
 My kisses are his daily feast ;  
 And yet he robs me of my rest.  
 Ah, wanton, will ye?"—

" Compare Dr. Lodge not only with his cotemporaries but his successors, and who, except Breton, has so happily anticipated the taste, simplicity, and purity of the most refined age." \*

Beside his miscellaneous poetry, Lodge published two dramatic pieces †, and may be considered as a voluminous prose writer. Seven of his prose tracts are described by Mr. Beloe ‡, and he translated the works of Josephus and Luc. An. Seneca. §

24. MARLOW, CHRISTOPHER. As the fame of this poet, though once in high repute as a dramatic writer, is now supported merely by one of his miscellaneous pieces, which is, indeed, of exquisite beauty, it has been thought necessary briefly to introduce him here; a more extended notice being deferred to a subsequent page. His earliest attempt appeared in 1587, when he was about twenty-five years of age, in a Translation of Coluthus's Rape of Helen into English rhyme. This was followed by " Certaine of Ovid's Elegies," licensed in 1593, but not printed until 1596. His next and happiest version was given to the public in 1598, under the title of " The Loves of Hero and Leander," being, like the preceding, a posthumous publication; for the author died prematurely in 1593, leaving this translation, of which the original is commonly but erroneously ascribed to Musæus, unfinished. Phillips, in his character of Marlow, comparing him with Shakspeare, says, that he resembled him not only in his dramatic

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\* British Bibliographer, No. 11. Preface to England's Helicon. pp. 6, 7.

† Biographia Dramatica, vol. i. p. 287. edit. 1782.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 159. et seq.

§ Phillips's Theatrum apud Brydges, p. 199.

circumstances, "but also because in his begun poem of Hero and Leander, he seems to have a resemblance of that clean, and unsophisticated wit, which is natural to that incomparable poet." \* Marlow translated also "Lucans first booke, line for line," in blank verse, which was licensed in 1593, and printed in 1600; but the production which has given him a claim to immortality, and which has retained its popularity even to the present day, first made its appearance in "England's Helicon," under the appellation of *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*. Of an age distinguished for the excellence of its rural poetry, this is, without doubt, the most admirable and finished pastoral.

25. MARSTON, JOHN, who has a claim to introduction here, from his powers as a satirical poet. In 1598, he published "The Metamorphosis, or Pigmalion's Image. And certaine Satyres." Of these the former is an elegant and luxurious description of a well-known fable, and to this sportive effusion Shakspeare seems to allude in his "Measure for Measure," where Lucio exclaims, "What, is there none of Pygmalion's images, newly made woman, to be had now?" † His fame as a satirist was established the year following, by the appearance of his "Scourge of Villanie. Three Bookes of Satyres."

A reprint of these pieces was given to the world by Mr. Bowles, in the year 1764, who terms the author the "*British Persius*," and adds, that very little is recorded of him with certainty. "Antony a Wood," he remarks, "who is generally exact in his accounts of men, and much to be relied upon, is remarkably deficient with respect to him; indeed there seems to be little reason to think he was of Oxford: it is certain from his works, that he was of Cambridge, where he was cotemporary with Mr. Hall, with whom, as it appears from his satyre, called *Reactio*, and from the *Scourge of Villanie*, sat. 10., he had some dispute.—It has not been generally known who

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\* *Theatrum Poetarum*, edit. of 1800, p. 113.

† Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 318. Act iii. sc. 2.



was the author of *Pigmalion* and the five satyres: but that they belong to Marston is clear from the sixth and tenth satyres of the *Scourge of Villanie*: and to this may be added the evidence of the collector of England's *Parnassus*, printed 1600, who cites the five first lines of the dedication to opinion, prefixed to *Pigmalion* by the name of J. Marston, p. 221."

"These satyres," says Mr. Warton, "in his observations on Spenser, contain many well drawn characters, and several good strokes of a satyrical genius, but are not, upon the whole, so finished and classical as Bishop Hall's: the truth is, they were satyrists of a different cast: Hall turned his pen against his cotemporary writers, and particularly versifiers; *Marston* chiefly inveighed against the growing foibles and vices of the age."\*

There is undoubtedly a want of polish in the satirical muse of Marston, which seems, notwithstanding, the result rather of design than inability; for the versification of "*Pigmalion's Image*," is in many of its parts highly melodious. Strength, verging upon coarseness, is, however, the characteristic of the "*Scourge of Villanie*," and may warrant the assertion of the author of "*The Returne from Parnassus*," that he was "a ruffian in his stile."† Yet he is highly complimented by Fitz-Geoffry, no mean judge of poetical merit, who declares that he is

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"satyrarum proxima primæ,  
Primaque, fas primas si numerare duas."‡

26. NICCOLS, RICHARD. This elegant poet was born in 1584, was entered of Magdalen College, Oxford, 1602, and took his bachelor's degree in 1606. In 1607, he published "*The Cuckow, a Poem*," in the couplet measure, which displays very vivid powers of description. His next work was a new and enlarged edition of "*The*

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\* *Miscellaneous Pieces of Antient English Poesie*, preface.

† *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i. p. 49.

‡ *Affaniæ*, lib. ii. *Ad Johannem Marstonium*.

Mirror for Magistrates," dated 1610, and to which, as a third and last part, he has added, with a distinct title, "A Winter Night's Vision. Being an Addition of such Princes, especially famous, who were exempted in the former Historie. By Richard Niccols, Oxon. Magd. Hall, &c." This supplement consists of an Epistle to the Reader, a Sonnet to Lord Charles Howard, an Induction, and the Lives of King Arthur; Edmund Ironside; Prince Alfred; Godwin, Earl of Kent; Robert Curthose; King Richard the First; King John; King Edward the Second; the two young Princes murdered in the Tower, and King Richard the Third; a selection, to which, with little accordancy, he has subjoined, in the octave stanza, a poem entitled "England's Eliza: or the victorious and triumphant reigne of that virgin empress of sacred memorie, Elizabeth Queene of Englande, &c." This is preceded by a Sonnet to Lady Elizabeth Clere, an Epistle to the Reader, and an Induction.

Niccols' addition to this popular series of Legends merits considerable praise, exhibiting many touches of the pathetic, and several highly-wrought proofs of a strong and picturesque imagination. In the Legend of Richard the Third, he appears to have studied with great effect the Drama of Shakspeare.

In 1615, our author published "Monodia: or, Waltham's Complaint upon the Death of the most virtuous and noble Lady, late deceased, the Lady Honor Hay;" and in the subsequent year, an elaborate poem, under the title of "London's Artillery, briefly containing the noble practise of that worthie Societie; with the moderne and ancient martiall exercises, natures of armes, vertue of Magistrates, Antiquitie, Glorie and Chronography of this honourable Cittie." 4to.\* This work, dedicated to "the Right Honourable Sir John Jolles, Knight, Lord Maior," &c. is introduced by two Sonnets, a Preface to the Reader, and a metrical Induction; it consists of ten cantos, in couplets, with copious illustrative notes; but, in

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\* British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 363.



point of poetical execution, is greatly inferior to his Cuckow, and Winter Night's Vision. Niccols, after residing several years at Oxford, left that University for the capital, where, records Wood, he "obtained an employment suitable to his faculty."\*

27. RALEIGH, SIR WALTER. Of this great, this high-minded, but unfortunate man, it will not be expected that, in his military, naval, or political character, any detail should here be given; it is only with Sir Walter, as a poet, that we are at present engaged, and therefore, after stating that he was born in 1552, at Hayes Farm, in the parish of Budley in Devonshire, and that, to the eternal disgrace of James the First, he perished on a scaffold in 1618, we proceed to record the singular circumstance, that, until the year 1813, no lover of our literature has thought it necessary to collect his poetry. The task, however, has at length been performed, in a most elegant and pleasing manner, by Sir Egerton Brydges †, and we have only to regret that the pieces which he has been able to throw together, should prove so few. Yet we may be allowed to express some surprise, that two poems quoted as Sir Walter's in Sir Egerton's edition of Phillips's "Theatrum Poetarum," should not have found a place in this collection. Of these, the first is attributed to Raleigh, on the authority of MSS. in the British Museum, and is entitled, "Sir Walter Raleigh in the Unquiet Rest of his last Sickness," a production equally admirable for its sublimity and Christian morality, and for the strength and concinnity of its expression ‡; the second, of which the closing couplet is quoted by Puttenham § as our author's, is given entire by Oldys from a transcript by Lady Isabella Thynne, where it is designated as "The Excuse written by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger years ||," and though vitiated by conceit,

\* Athenæ Oxon. vol. i. col. 402.

† "The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh: now first collected. With a Biographical and Critical Introduction:" Dedicated to William Bolland, Esq.

‡ Phillips's Theatrum apud Brydges, p. 308, 309.

§ Arte of English Poesie, reprint of 1811. p. 168.

|| Phillips's Theatrum apud Brydges, p. 314, 315.

appears to be well authenticated. These, together with two fragments preserved by Puttenham\*, would have proved welcome additions to the volume, and, with the exception of his "Cynthia," a poem in praise of the Queen, and now lost, might probably have included all that has been attributed to the muse of Raleigh.

The poetry of our bard seems to have been highly valued in his own days; Puttenham says, that "for dittie and amorous ode, I finde Sir Walter Rawleygh's vayne most loftie, insolent, and passionate †;" and Bolton affirms, that "the English poems of Sir Walter Raleigh are not easily to be mended ‡;" opinions which, even in the nineteenth century, a perusal of his poems will tend to confirm. Of vigour of diction, and moral energy of thought, the pieces entitled, "*A Description of the Country's Recreations*;" a "*Vision upon the Fairy Queen*;" the "*Farewell*," and the *Lines* written in "*his last Sickness*," may be quoted as exemplars: and for amatory sweetness, and pastoral simplicity, few efforts will be found to surpass the poems distinguished as "*Phillida's Love-call*;" "*The Shepherd's Description of Love*;" the "*Answer to Marlow*," and "*The Silent Lover*."

The general estimate of Raleigh as a poet, has been sketched by Sir E. Brydges with his usual felicity of illustration, and as the impression with which he has favoured the public is very limited, and must necessarily soon become extremely scarce, a transcript from this portion of his introductory matter, will have its due value with the reader.

"Do I pronounce RALEIGH a poet? Not, perhaps, in the judgment of a severe criticism. RALEIGH, in his better days, was too much occupied in action to have cultivated all the powers of a poet, which require solitude and perpetual meditation, and a refinement of sensibility, such as intercourse with business and the world deadens!

\* Arte of English Poesie, reprint, p. 165. 167.

† Ibid. p. 51.

‡ Vide Phillips's Theatrum apud Brydges, p. 269.



"But, perhaps, it will be pleaded, that his long years of imprisonment gave him leisure for meditation, more than enough! It has been beautifully said by Lovelace, that

"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage,"

so long as the mind is free. But broken spirits, and indescribable injuries and misfortunes, do not agree with the fervour required by the Muse. Hope, that 'sings of promised pleasure,' could never visit him in his dreary bondage; and Ambition, whose lights had hitherto led him through difficulties and dangers and sufferings, must now have kept entirely aloof from one, whose fetters disabled him to follow as a votary in her train. Images of rural beauty, quiet, and freedom might, perhaps, have added, by the contrast, to the poignancy of his present painful situation; and he might rather prefer the severity of mental labour in unravelling the dreary and comfortless records of perplexing History in remote ages of war and bloodshed, than to quicken his sensibilities by lingering amid the murmurs of Elysian waterfalls!

"There are times when we dare not stir our feelings or our fancies; when the only mode of reconciling ourselves to the excruciating pressure of our sorrows is the encouragement of a dull apathy, which will allow none but the coarser powers of the intellect to operate.

"The production of an *Heroic Poem* would have nobly employed this illustrious Hero's mighty faculties, during the lamentable years of his unjust incarceration. But how could *He* delight to dwell on the tale of Heroes, to whom the result of Heroism had been oppression, imprisonment, ruin, and condemnation to death?

"We have no proof that RALEIGH possessed the copious, vivid, and creative powers of Spenser; nor is it probable that any cultivation would have brought forth from him fruit equally rich. But even in the careless fragments now presented to the reader, I think we can perceive some traits of attraction and excellence which,



perhaps, even Spenser wanted. If less diversified than that gifted bard, he would, I think, have sometimes been more forcible and sublime. His images would have been more gigantic, and his reflections more daring. With all his mental attention keenly bent on the busy state of existing things in political society, the range of his thoughts had been lowered down to practical wisdom; but other habits of intellectual exercise, excursions into the ethereal fields of fiction, and converse with the spirits which inhabit those upper regions, would have given a grasp and a colour to his conceptions as magnificent as the fortitude of his soul!"\*

28. SACKVILLE, THOMAS, Lord Buckhurst, was born at Withyam, in Sussex, in 1527. † Though a statesman of some celebrity in the reign of Elizabeth, his fame with posterity rests entirely on his merits as a poet, and these are of the highest order. He possesses the singular felicity of being the first writer of a genuine English tragedy, and the primary inventor of "The Mirrour for Magistrates;" two obligations conferred upon poetry of incalculable extent.

Of Gorboduc, which was acted in 1561, and surreptitiously printed in 1563, we shall elsewhere have occasion to speak, confining our notice, in this place, to his celebrated *Induction* and *Legend of Henry Duke of Buckingham*, which were first published in the *Second Part* and *Second Edition of Baldwin's Mirrour for Magistrates*, printed in 1563. To this collection we are, indeed, most highly indebted, if the observation of Lord Orford be correct:—"Our historic plays," he remarks, "are allowed to have been founded on the heroic narratives in the *Mirrour for Magistrates*; to that plan, and to the boldness of lord Buckhurst's new scenes, perhaps we owe SHAKSPEARE!" ‡

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\* Biographical and Critical Introduction, pp. 43—46.

† The date of this nobleman's birth has been variously given: thus Ritson affirms in his *Bibliographia*, p. 324., he was born in 1536; and Sir Egerton Brydges in his edition of the "*Theatrum Poetarum*," also expressly tells us, that "Sackville was not born till 1536," p. 66; but in "*The British Bibliographer*" he has corrected this assertion, and places his nativity in 1527, which is the true era, as he died aged 81, in 1608.

‡ Park's edition of Lord Orford's *Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. ii. p. 130.



Our gratitude to this nobleman will be still further enhanced, when we recollect, that he was more assuredly a model for *Spenser*, the allegorical pictures in his *Induction* being, in the opinion of Warton, "so beautifully drawn, that, in all probability, they contributed to direct, at least to stimulate, Spenser's imagination." In fact, whoever reads this noble poem of Lord Buckhurst with attention must feel convinced, that it awoke into being the allegorical groupings of Spenser; and that, in force of imagination, in pathos, and in awful and picturesque delineation, it is not inferior to any canto of the *Fairie Queen*. Indeed from the nature of its plan, the scene being laid in hell, and *Sorrow* being the conductor of the hapless complainants, it often assumes a deeper tone and exhibits a more sombre hue than the muse of Spenser, and more in consonance with the severer intonations of the harp of Dante. How greatly is it to be lamented that the effusions of this divine bard are limited to the pieces which we have enumerated, and that so early in life he deserted the fountains of inspiration, to embark on a troubled sea of politics. Lord Buckhurst died, full of honours, at the Council-Table at Whitehall, on April 19th, 1608, aged eighty-one.

Sir Egerton Brydges, speaking of his magnificent seat at Knowle in West-Kent, tells us, that, "though restored with all the freshness of modern art, it retains the character and form of its Elizabethan splendour. The visitor may behold the same walls, and walk in the same apartments, which witnessed the inspiration of him, who composed *The Induction*, and *the Legend of the Duke of Buckingham*! He may sit under the same oaks, and behold, arrayed in all the beauty of art, the same delightful scenery, which cherished the day-dreams of the glowing poet! Perchance he may behold the same shadowy beings glancing through the shades, and exhibiting themselves in all their picturesque attitudes to his entranced fancy!"\*

29. SOUTHWELL, ROBERT. This amiable but unfortunate Roman Catholic Priest was born at St. Faith's in Norfolk, 1560; he was

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\* British Bibliographer, No. IV. p. 295.



educated at the University of Douay, became a member of the Society of Jesus at Rome, when but sixteen, and finally prefect in the English college there. Being sent as a missionary to England, in 1584, he was betrayed and apprehended in 1592, and after being imprisoned three years, and racked ten times, he was executed, as an agent for Popery, at Tyburn, on the 21st of February 1595.

Whatever may have been his religious intemperance or enthusiasm, his works, as a poet and a moralist, place him in a most favourable light; and we are unwilling to credit, that he who was thus elevated, just, and persuasive in his writings, could be materially incorrect in his conduct. In 1595, appeared his "Saint Peters Complaint, with other poems:" 4to., which went through a second impression in the same year, and was followed by "Mœoniæ. Or certaine excellent poems and spiritual Hymns; omitted in the last impression of Peter's complaint; being needefull thereunto to be annexed, as being both divine and wittie," 1595-1596. 4to. These two articles contain his poetical works; his other publications, under the titles of "Marie Magdalen's Funerall Tears;" "The Triumphs over Death; or a consolatorie Epistle, for afflicted minds, in the effects of dying friends," and "Short Rules of Good Life," being tracts in prose, though interspersed with occasional pieces of poetry.

The productions of Southwell, notwithstanding the unpopularity of his religious creed, were formerly in great request; "it is remarkable," observes Mr. Ellis, "that the very few copies of his works which are now known to exist, are the remnant of at least seventeen different editions, of which eleven were printed between 1593 and 1600."\* The most ample edition of his labours was printed in 1620 in 16mo., and exhibits five distinct title-pages to the several pieces which we have just enumerated.

Bolton in his "Hypercritica," written about 1616, does credit to his taste, by remarking that "never must be forgotten St. Peter's Complaint, and those other serious poems, said to be father South-

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\* Specimens of the Early English Poets, 1st edit. vol. ii. p. 166.



wells : the English whereof, as it is most proper, so the sharpness and light of wit is very rare in them." \* From this period, however, oblivion seems to have hidden the genius of Southwell from observation, until Warton, by reproducing the criticism of Bolton, in the third volume of his *History of English Poetry* 1781, recalled attention to the neglected bard. Two years afterwards, Mr. Waldron, in his notes to Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, gave us three specimens of Southwell's poetry; Mr. Headley reprinted these in 1787 †; Mr. Ellis extracted an additional piece from the "*Mœoniæ*" in 1801; in 1802 Ritson presented us with a list of his writings accompanied by the notes of Mr. Park ‡; and lastly, in 1808, Mr. Haslewood favoured us with an essay on his life and works. §

Both the poetry and the prose of Southwell possess the most decided merit; the former, which is almost entirely restricted to moral and religious subjects, flows in a vein of great harmony, perspicuity, and elegance, and breathes a fascination resulting from the subject and the pathetic mode of treating it, which fixes and deeply interests the reader.

Mr. Haslewood, on concluding his essay on Southwell, remarks, that "those who 'least love the religion,' still must admire and praise the author, and regret that neither his simple strains in prose, nor his 'polished metre,' have yet obtained a collected edition of his works for general readers." The promise of such an edition escaped from the pen of Mr. Headley; at least it was his intention to re-publish "the better part of Southwell's poetry;" but death, most unhappily, precluded the attempt.

30. SPENSER, EDMUND. This great poet, who was born in London in 1553, has acquired an ever-during reputation in pastoral and epic poetry, especially in the last. His "*Shepherd's Calender* : contain-

\* Vide Warton, vol. iii.; or, Phillips's *Theatrum* apud Brydges, p. 268.

† *Select Beauties of Antient English Poetry*, vol. ii. Kett's edit. pp. 2. 5. 86.

‡ *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 340, 341.

§ *Censura Literaria*, vol. vi. p. 285—298.



ing twelve aeglogues, proportionable to the twelve monethes," was published in 1579; it is a work which has conferred upon him the title of the Father of the English pastoral, and has almost indissolubly associated his name with those of Theocritus and Virgil. Yet two great defects have contributed deeply to injure the popularity of his Calender; the adoption of a language much too old and obsolete for the age in which it was written, and the too copious introduction of satire on ecclesiastical affairs. The consequence of this latter defect, this incongruous mixture of church polemics, has been, that the aeglogues for May, July, and September, are any thing but pastorals. Simplicity of diction is of the very essence of perfection in pastoral poetry; but vulgar, rugged, and obscure terms, can only be productive of disgust; a result which was felt and complained of by the contemporaries of the poet, and which not all the ingenuity of his old commentator, E. K., can successfully palliate or defend. The pieces which have been least injured by this "ragged and rustical rudeness," as the scholiast aptly terms it, are the pastorals for January, June, October and December, which are indeed very beautiful, and the genuine offspring of the rural reed.

It is, however, to the *Fairie Queene* that we must refer for a just delineation of this illustrious bard. It appears to have been commenced about the year 1579; the first three books were printed in 1590, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth, in 1596. Whether the remaining six books, which were to have completed the design, were finished or not, continues yet unascertained; Browne, the author of *Britannias Pastorals*\*, and Sir Aston Cokain†, consider the poem to have been left nearly in its present unfinished state; while Sir James Ware asserts ‡ that the latter books were lost by the carelessness of the poet's servant whom he had sent before him into England on the breaking out of the rebellion, and, what seems still more to the pur-

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\* Book ii. Song 1. See Chalmers's English Poets, vol. vi. p. 276. col. 2.

† Poems, edit. 1658. p. 8.

‡ Preface to Spenser's View of the State of Ireland, 1633.



pose, Sir John Stradling, a contemporary of Spenser, and a highly respectable character, positively declares that some of his manuscripts were burnt when his house in Ireland was fired by the rebels. \* Now, as two cantos of a lost book, entitled *The Legend of Constance*, were actually published in 1609 as a part of Spenser's manuscripts which had escaped the conflagration of his castle, it is highly probable that the declaration of Sir John Stradling is correct, and that the poet, if he did not absolutely finish the *Fairie Queene*, had made considerable progress in the work, and that his labours perished with his mansion.

The defects which have vitiated the *Shepherd's Calender*, are not apparent in the *Fairie Queene*; the charge of obsolete diction, which has been so generally urged against the latter poem, must have arisen from the just censure which, in this respect, was bestowed upon the former, and the transference may be considered as a striking proof of critical negligence, and of the long-continued influence of opinion, however erroneous. The language of the *Fairie Queene* is, in fact, the language of the era in which it was written, and even in the present day, with few and trifling exceptions, as intelligible as are the texts of Shakspeare and Milton. †

Had Spenser, in this admirable poem, preserved greater unity in the construction of his fable; had he, following the example of Ariosto, employed human instead of allegorical heroes, he would

\* Epigrammatum Libri quatuor, 1607, p. 100. For this striking testimony we are indebted to Mr. Todd's valuable edition of Spenser, vol. i. p. cxxi.

† To the charge of "critical negligence," in this respect, I am sorry to say, that I must plead guilty in my "Literary Hours," where, in delineating the character of Spenser, I have brought forward this accusation of *obsolete diction*, without the proper discrimination. Vide *Literary Hours*, 3d edit. vol. ii. p. 161. — In every other respect I consider the criticism as correct. I had then read Spenser but twice through; a further familiarity with the *Fairie Queene* has induced me to withdraw the censure, and to accede to the opinion of Mr. Malone, who conceives the language of the *Fairie Queene* to have been "perfectly intelligible to every reader of poetry in the time of Queen Elizabeth, though the *Shepherds Calendar* was not even then understood without a commentary." — See his *Dryden's Prose Works*, vol. iii. p. 94.



undoubtedly have been at once the noblest and most interesting of poets. But, as it is, the warmest admirer of his numerous excellencies must confess, that the Personifications which conduct the business of the poem, and are consequently exposed to the broad day-light of observation, are too unsubstantial in their form and texture, too divested of all human organisation, to become the subjects of attachment or anxiety. They flit before us, indeed, as mere abstract and metaphysical essences, as beings neither of this nor any other order of planetary existence. A witch, a fairy, or a magician, is a creation sufficiently blended with humanity, to be capable of exciting very powerful emotion; but the meteor-shades of Holiness or Chastity, personally conducting a long series of adventures, is a contrivance so very remote from all earthly, or even what we conceive of supernatural, agency, as to baffle and revolt the credulities of the reader, however ductile or acquiescent.

Yet, notwithstanding these great and obvious errors in the very foundation of the structure, the merits of Spenser in every other respect are of so decided and exalted a nature, as to place him, in spite of every deduction, in the same class with Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton. His versification is, in general, uncommonly sweet and melodious; his powers of description such, with respect to beauty, fidelity, and minute finishing, as have not since been equalled; while in strength, brilliancy, and fertility of imagination, it will be no hyperbole to assert, that he takes precedence of almost every poet ancient or modern.

One peculiar and endearing characteristic of the *Fairie Queene*, is the exquisite tenderness which pervades the whole poem. It is impossible indeed to read it without being in love with the author, without being persuaded that the utmost sweetness of disposition, and the purest sincerity and goodness of heart distinguished him who thus delighted to unfold the kindest feelings of our nature, and whose language, by its singular simplicity and energy, seems to breathe the very stamp and force of truth. How grateful is it to record, that the personal conduct of the bard corresponded with the impression



resulting from his works ; that gentleness, humility, and piety, were the leading features of his life, as they still are the most delightful characteristics of his poetry. \*

Yet amiable and engaging as is the general cast of Spenser's genius, he has nevertheless exhibited the most marked excellence as a delineator of those passions and emotions which approach to, or constitute, the sublime. No where do we find the agitations of fear, astonishment, terror, and despair, drawn with such bold and masterly relief ; they start in living energy from his pen, and bear awful witness to the grandeur and elevation of his powers.

It is almost superfluous to add, after what has been already observed, that the morality of the *Fairie Queene* is throughout pure and impressive. It is a poem which, more than any other, inculcates those mild and passive virtues, that patience, resignation, and forbearance, which owe their influence to Christian principles. While vice and intemperance are developed in all their hideous deformity, those self-denying efforts, those benevolent and social sympathies, which soften and endear existence, are painted in the most bewitching colours : it is, in short, a work from the study of which no human being can rise without feeling fresh incitement to cherish and extend the charities of life.

Spenser died comparatively, though not actually, indigent, on the 16th of January, 1598,

31. STIRLING, WILLIAM ALEXANDER, EARL OF. This accomplished nobleman was born at Menstrie, in the county of Clackmannan, Scotland, 1580, a descendant of the family of Macdonald. He was a favourite both of James the First, and of his son Charles, and by the latter was created Viscount Canada, and subsequently Earl of

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\* It is impossible to view the portrait prefixed to Mr. Todd's valuable edition of Spenser, without being incredulous as to its authenticity. There is a pertness and satirical sharpness in its expression very inconsistent, not only with the disposition of the poet, but with the features given to him in every other representation, of which the leading character is an air of pensive sweetness.

Stirling. From an early period he gave promise of more than common genius, and his attachment to poetry was fostered, as in Drummond, by the sorrows of unrequited love. To the stimulus of this powerful passion we are indebted for his "Aurora: containing the first Fancies of the Author's Youth," 4to., which was published, together with some other pieces, in 1604. This elegant production, the solace of a rural retreat, on his return from a tour on the continent, consists of one hundred and six sonnets, ten songs or odes, some madrigals, elegies, &c., and places the talents of the writer in a very favourable point of view: for the versification is often peculiarly harmonious, and many beauties, both in imagery and sentiment, are interspersed through the collection, which, though a juvenile production, must be pronounced the most poetical of his works. The diction approximates, indeed, so nearly to that of the present century, that a specimen may be considered as a curiosity, and will confirm the assertion of Lord Orford, that he "*was greatly superior to the style of his age.*"\* With the exception of a little quaintness in the second line, the subsequent sonnet will equal the expectation of the reader: —

## SONNET X.

" I SWEARE, Aurora, by thy starrie eyes,  
 And by those golden lockes whose locke none slips,  
 And by the corall of thy rosie lippes,  
 And by the naked snowes which beantie dies;  
 I sweare by all the jewels of thy mind,  
 Whose like yet never worldly treasure bought,  
 Thy solide judgement and thy generous thought,  
 Which in this darkened age have clearly shin'd:  
 I sweare by those, and by my spotless love,  
 And by my secret, yet most fervent fires,  
 That I have never nurc'd but chast desires,  
 And such as modestie might well approve.  
 Then since I love those vertuous parts in thee,  
 Shouldst thou not love this vertuous mind in me?" †

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\* Royal and Noble Authors apud Park, vol. v. p. 73.

† Chalmers's English Poets, vol. v. p. 298.



The remaining poems of Stirling consist of four tragedies in alternate rhyme, termed by their author "monarchicke;" namely, *Darius*, published in 1603; *Cræsus*, in 1604; and the *Alexandrian Tragedy*, and *Julius Cæsar*, in 1607. These pieces are not calculated for the stage; but include some admirable lessons for sovereign power, and several choruses written with no small share of poetic vigour. With the *Aurora* in 1604, appeared his poem entitled, "A Parænesis to the Prince," a production of great value both in a moral and literary light, and which must have been highly acceptable to a character so truly noble as was that of Henry, to whose memory he paid a pleasing tribute, by printing an "Elegie on his Death," in 1612.

The most elaborate of this nobleman's works was given to the public at Edinburgh, in 1614, in 4to., and entitled, "Domes-day; or the great Day of the Lord's Judgment." It is divided into twelve *Houres* or *Cantos*, and has an encomium prefixed by Drummond. Piety and sound morality, expressed often in energetic diction, form the chief merit of this long poem, for it has little pretension to either sublimity or pathos. It had excited, however, the attention of Addison; for when the first two books of *Domes-day* were re-printed by A. Johnstoun in 1720, their editor tells us, "that Addison had read the author's whole works with the greatest satisfaction; and had remarked, that 'the beauties of our ancient English poets were too slightly passed over by modern writers, who, out of a peculiar singularity, had rather take pains to find fault than endeavour to excel.'"\*

Lord Stirling republished the whole of his poetical works, with the exception of the "*Aurora*," in 1637, in a folio volume, including a new but unfinished poem, under the title of *Jonathan*. This impression had undergone a most assiduous revision, and was the last labour of its author, who died on the 12th of February, 1640, in his sixtieth year.

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\* Orford's Royal and Noble Authors apud Park, vol. v. p. 76.

32. SYDNEY, SIR PHILIP, one of the most heroic and accomplished characters in the annals of England, was born at Penshurst \*, in West Kent, on Nov. 29th, 1554, and died at the premature age of thirty-one, on the 17th of October, 1586, having been mortally wounded on the 26th of the preceding September, in a desperate engagement near Zutphen. "As he was returning from the field of battle," records his friend, Lord Brooke, "pale, languid, and thirsty with excess of bleeding, he asked for water to quench his thirst. The water was brought; and had no sooner approached his lips, than he instantly resigned it to a dying soldier, whose ghastly countenance attracted his notice—speaking these ever-memorable words; *This man's necessity is still greater than mine.*"†

Had Sir Philip paid an exclusive attention to the poetical art, there is every reason to suppose that he would have occupied a master's place in this department; as it is, his poetry, though too often vitiated by an intermixture of antithesis and false wit, and by an attempt to introduce the classic metres, is still rich with frequent proofs of vigour, elegance, and harmony. His "*Arcadia*," originally published in 1590, abounds in poetry, among which are some pieces of distinguished merit. In 1591, was printed his "*Astrophel and Stella*," a collection of one hundred and eight sonnets, and eleven songs, and of these several may be pronounced beautiful. They were annexed to the subsequent editions of the *Arcadia*, together with "*Sonets*," containing miscellaneous pieces of lyric poetry, several of which had appeared in Constable's "*Diana*," 1594. To these may be added, as completing his poetical works, fifteen contributions to "*England's Helicon*," a few sonnets in "*England's Parnassus*," three songs in "*The Lady of May, a masque*," subjoined to the *Arcadia*, two pastorals in Davison's poems, 1611, and an English version of the Psalms of David.

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\* "Its rude grandeur, its immense hall, its castellated form, its numerous apartments, well accord with the images of chivalry, which the memory of Sydney inspires."—British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 293.

† Zouch's Life of Sydney, 4to. p. 256.



That Sydney possessed an exquisite taste for, and a critical knowledge of poetry, is sufficiently evident from his eloquent "Defence of Poesy," first published in 1595. This, with his Collected Poetry, would form a very acceptable reprint, especially if recommended by an introduction from the elegant and glowing pen of Sir Egerton Brydges, whose favourite Sydney avowedly is, and to whom he has already paid some very interesting tributes. \*

The moral character of this great man equalled his intellectual energy; and the last years of his short life were employed in translating Du Plessi's excellent treatise on the Truth of Christianity.

33. SYLVESTER, JOSHUA, a poet who has lately attracted a considerable degree of attention, from the discovery of his having furnished to Milton the *Prima Stamina* of his *Paradise Lost*. † He was educated by his uncle, William Plumb, Esq., and died at Middleburgh, in Zealand, on the 28th of September, 1618, aged fifty-five. His principal work, a translation of the "Divine Weeks and Works" of Du Bartas, was commenced in 1590, prosecuted in 1592, 1598, 1599, and completed in 1605, since which period it has undergone six editions; three in quarto, and three in folio, the last being dated 1641.

Both the version of Sylvester, and his original poems, published with it, are remarkable for their inequality, for great beauties, and for glaring defects. His versification is sometimes exquisitely melodious, and was recognised as such by his contemporaries, who distinguished him by the appellation of "silver-tongued Sylvester." ‡ His diction also is occasionally highly nervous and energetic, and sometimes simply elegant; but much more frequently is it disfigured by tumour and bombast. Of the golden lines which his Du Bartas con-

\* Vide Poems, 1807, 12mo. 4th. edit.; and British Bibliographer, vol. i. p. 81—105. and 289—295. Censura Literaria, vol. ii. p. 175. et seq.; and vol. iii. p. 389.

† Considerations on Milton's Early Reading, and the *Prima Stamina* of his *Paradise Lost*; together with Extracts from a Poet of the Sixteenth Century. In a Letter to William Falconer, M.D., from Charles Dunster, Esq. M. A. London, 1800.

‡ Vide Wood's *Athenæ*, vol. i. p. 594.; and Phillips's *Theatrum*.

tains, it may be necessary to furnish the reader some proof, and the following, we imagine, cannot fail to excite his surprise :

“ O thrice, thrice happy he, who shuns the cares  
Of city-troubles, and of state affairs ;  
And, serving Ceres, tills with his own team  
His own free land, left by his friends to him ! —  
And leading all his life at home in peace,  
Always in sight of his own smoke ; no seas,  
No other seas he knows, nor other torrent,  
Than that which waters with his silver current  
His native meadows : and that very earth  
Shall give him burial, which first gave him birth.

To summon timely sleep, he doth not need  
Æthiops cold rush, nor drowsy poppy seed,  
The stream's mild murmur, as it gently gushes,  
His healthy limbs in quiet slumber hushes ; —  
— all self-private, serving God, he writes  
Fearless, and sings but what his heart indites,  
’Till Death, dread Servant of the Eternal Judge,  
Comes very late to his sole-seated Lodge. —

Let me, Good Lord ! among the Great unkenn'd,  
My rest of days in the calm country end :  
My company, pure thoughts, to work thy will,  
My court, a cottage on a lowly hill.” \*

So popular was this version in the early part of the seventeenth century, that Jonson, no indiscriminate encomiast, exclaims, in an epigram to the translator,

“ Behold ! the rev’rend shade of Bartas stands  
Before my thought, and in thy right commands,  
That to the world I publish for him this,  
‘ Bartas doth wish thy English now were his.’  
So well in that are his inventions wrought,  
As *his* will now be the *translation* thought ;

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\* For further observations on, and numerous extracts from, Sylvester’s Du Bartas, see Dunster’s Considerations, and Drake’s Literary Hours, 3d edit. vol. iii. Nos. 49, 50, and 51.



Thine the *original*; and France shall boast  
No more the maiden glories she has lost." \*

The greatest compliment, however, which Sylvester has received, is the imitation of Milton.

The virtues of Sylvester were superior to his talents; he was, in fact, to adopt the language of one of his intimate friends, a poet

" Whom Envy scarce could hate; whom all admir'd,  
Who liv'd beloved, and a Saint expir'd." †

34. TURBERVILLE, GEORGE, a younger son of Nicholas Turberville, of Whitechurch, in Dorsetshire, a gentleman of respectable family, was born about the year 1540. He was educated at Winchester and Oxford, and in 1562 became a member of one of the Inns of Court. Here the reputation which he had acquired for talents and the dispatch of business, obtained for him the appointment of secretary to Thomas Randolph, Esq., ambassador to the Court of Russia, and, whilst in this country, he employed his leisure in writing poems descriptive of its manners and customs, addressed to Spenser, Dancie, and Park, and afterwards published in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, 1598, vol. i. pp. 384, 385.

On his return from this tour, he added greatly to his celebrity, as a scholar and a gentleman, by the publication of his " Epitaphes, epigrams, songs, and sonets, with a discourse of the friendly affections of Tymetes to Pyndara his ladie," 8vo. 1567. This year, indeed, appears to have been fully occupied by him in preparing his works for the press; for, during its course, independent of the collection just mentioned, he printed " The Heroycall Epistles of the learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso: with Aulus Sabinus aunsweres to certaine of the same," 8vo., and " The Eclogs of the poet B. Mantuan Carmelitan, turned into English verse, and set forth with

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\* One of the Epigrams prefixed to the folio edition of Sylvester's Works. Ten pages in the copy of 1641 are occupied by commendatory Poems on the Translator.

† Lines by Viccars, under the portrait of Sylvester, in the edition of 1641.

the argument to every eglogue." 12mo. These productions, with his "Tragical Tales, translated in time of his troubles, out of Sundrie Italians, with the argument and L'Envoye to ech tale," printed in 1576, and again in 1587, with annexed "Epitaphs and Sonets, and some other broken pamphlettes and Epistles," together with some pieces of poetry in his "Art of Venerie," and in his "Booke of Faulconrie or Hauking," 1575, and a few commendatory stanzas addressed to his friends, form the whole of his poetical works.

Turberville enjoyed, as a writer of songs, sonnets, and minor poems, a high degree of popularity in his day; it was not, however, calculated for durability, and he appears to have been forgotten, as a poet, before the close of the seventeenth century. His muse has experienced a temporary revival, through the medium of Mr. Chalmers's English Poets, and to the antiquary, and lover of old English literature, this reprint will be acceptable; but, for the general reader, he will be found deficient in many essential points. Fancy, it is true, may be discovered in his pieces, although forced and quaint; but of nature, simplicity, and feeling, the portion is unfortunately small. Occasional felicity of diction, a display of classical allusion, and imagery taken from the amusements and customs of the age, are not wanting; but the warmth, the energy, and the enthusiasm of poetry are sought for in vain.

Our author survived the year 1594, though the date of his death is not known.

35. TUSSEY, THOMAS, one of the most popular, and, assuredly, one of the most useful of our elder poets, was born, according to Dr. Mavor, about 1515, and died about 1583.\* The work which ushers him to notice here, and has given him the appellation of the English Varro, was published in 1557, and entitled "A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie," a small quarto of thirteen leaves. It was shortly followed by "One Hundreth Good Poyntes of Huswiffry;" and in 1573, the whole was enlarged with the title of "Five Hun-

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\* Vide Preliminary Dissertation to his edition of Tussey, pp. 5. 13. 20, 21. 25.



dreth Points of Good Husbandry, united to as many of Good Huswifery." The most complete edition, however, and the last in the author's life-time, was printed in 1580. So acceptable did this production prove to the lovers of poetry and agriculture, that it underwent nineteen editions during its first century, and Dr. Mavor's edition, published in 1812, forms the last, and twenty-fourth. The mutilated state of the old copies, indeed, exemplifies, more than any thing else, the practical use to which they were subjected; "some books," remarks Mr. Haslewood, "became heir-looms from value, and Tusser's work, for useful information in every department of agriculture, together with its quaint and amusing observations, perhaps passed the copies from father to son, till they crumbled away in the bare shifting of the pages, and the mouldering relic only lost its value, by the casual mutilation of time."\* That the estimation in which the poems of Tusser were held by his contemporaries, might lead to such a result, it may be allowable to conclude from the assertion of Googe, who, speaking of our author's works, says, that "in his fancie, they may, without any presumption, compare with any of the Varros, Columellas, or Palladios of Rome."†

The great merit of Tusser's book, independent of the utility of its agricultural precepts, consists in the faithful picture which it delineates of the manners, customs, and domestic life of the English farmer, and in the morality, piety, and benevolent simplicity, which pervade the whole. In a poetical light its pretensions are not great. The part relative to Husbandry is divided into months, and written in quatrains, of eleven syllables in each line, which are frequently constructed with much terseness, and with a happy epigrammatic brevity. The abstracts prefixed to each month, are given in short verses of four and five syllables each; and numerous illustrative pieces, and nearly the whole of the Huswifery, present us with a vast variety of

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\* British Bibliographer, No. III. p. 286.

† Preface to his Translation of Conradus Heresbachius, printed in 1596, and 1601.

metres, among which, as Ritson has observed, "may be traced the popular stanza which attained so much celebrity in the pastoral ballads of Shenstone."\* Little that can be termed ornamental, either in imagery or episode, is to be found in this poem; but the sketches of character and costume, of rural employment and domestic economy, are so numerous, and given with such fidelity, raciness, and spirit, as to render the work in a very uncommon degree interesting and amusing.

36. WARNER, WILLIAM. Of the biography of this fine old poet, little has descended to posterity. He is supposed to have been born about the year 1558; and that he died at Amwell in Hertfordshire, and was by profession an attorney, are two of the principal facts which, by an appeal to the parish register of Amwell, have been clearly ascertained. In a note to his poem on this village, Mr. Scott first communicated this curious document: — "1608—1609. Master William Warner, a man of good yeares, and of honest reputation: by his profession an atturneye of the Common Pleas: author of Albion's England, dyngge suddenly in the night in his bedde, without any former complaynt or sicknesse, on Thursday night, beeinge the 9th day of March: was buried the Saturday following, and lyeth in the church at the corner, under the stone of Gwalter Fader." †

The lines which gave occasion to this extract form a pleasing tribute to the memory of the bard:

" He, who in verse his Country's story told,  
Here dwelt awhile; perchance here sketch'd the scene,  
Where his fair Argente, from crowded courts  
For pride self-banish'd, in sequester'd shades  
Sojourn'd disguis'd, and met the slighted youth  
Who long had sought her love — the gentle bard  
Sleeps here, *by Fame forgotten.*"

The words in Italics which close this passage, were not at the time they were written correctly true, for Warner had then been a

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\* Bibliographia Poetica, p. 374.

† See Sharpe's British Poets, No. LXXIX. p. 17. note 20.



subject of great and judicious praise, both to Mrs. Cooper and Dr. Percy; and, since the era of Scott, he has been imitated, re-edited, and liberally applauded. He is conjectured to have been a native of Warwickshire, to have been educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and to have left the University without a degree, for the purpose of cultivating his poetical genius in the metropolis. His *Albion's England*, on which his fame is founded, was first printed in 1586, when the poet was probably about eight and twenty. It underwent six subsequent editions during the author's life-time, namely, in 1589, 1592, 1596, 1597, 1602, and 1606. \*

This extensive poetic history, which is deduced from the deluge to the reign of Elizabeth, is distributed into twelve books, and contains seventy-seven chapters; it is dedicated to Henry Cary, Lord Hunsdon, under whose patronage and protection Warner appears to have spent the latter portion of his life. Such was the popularity of "Albion's England," that it threw into the shade what had formerly been the favourite collection, the "Mirror for Magistrates;" Warner was ranked by his contemporaries, says Dr. Percy, on a level with Spenser; they were called the Homer and Virgil of their age †; and Meres, speaking of the English tongue, declares, that by his (Warner's) pen, it "was much enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments." ‡ Less hyperbolical, and, therefore, more judicious praise, was allotted him by Drayton, who, after noticing his incorrectnesses, adds with a liberal spirit—

" yet thus let me say  
For my old friend, some passages there be  
In him, which I protest have taken me  
With almost wonder, so fine, so clear, and new,  
As yet they have been equalled by few;" §

a decision which subsequent criticism has confirmed.

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\* Ritson's *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 384.

† *Reliques*, vol. ii. p. 239. 4th edit.

‡ *Wit's Academy*, part ii. p. 280. edit. of 1598.

§ *Of Poets and Poesy*, Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. iv. p. 399. col. 2.

One of his most pleasing episodes, "Argentile and Curan," was inserted by Mrs. Cooper in her "Muses' Library," who justly terms it "a tale full of beautiful incidents, in the romantic taste, extremely affecting, rich in ornament, wonderfully various in stile, and, in short, one of the most beautiful pastorals I ever met with." \* This was again republished by Percy in his "Reliques †," and finally honoured by Mason in the third volume of his Poems, 1796, where it forms a *Legendary Drama in five acts, written on the old English model*. Ritson, Headley, and Ellis, have furnished us with additional extracts, and at length *Albion's England* has found its place in the body of our English Poetry through the taste and exertions of Mr. Chalmers. ‡

Ease, simplicity, and pathos, are the leading virtues of Warner's muse. He eminently excelled in depicting rural and pastoral life, and in developing those simple and touching emotions which pervade the innocent and artless bosom. His vices were those of his age, and may be included under the heads of indelicacy, inequality, and quaintness; these expunged, his finer parts strongly interest our affections, and endear to us the memory of the good old bard.

37. WATSON, THOMAS, a once popular writer of sonnets, was born in London, and educated at Oxford, whence he returned to the metropolis for the purpose of practising the law. In 1581, his principal poetical work was entered on the Stationers' books, and afterwards published with the following title, though without date:—"The ΕΚΑΤΟΜΠΑΘΙΑ, or Passionate Centurie of Love, divided into two Parts: whereof the first expresseth the Author's Sufferance in Love: the latter, his long Farewell to Love and all his Tyrannie. Composed by Thomas Watson, Gentleman; and published at the Request of certeine Gentlemen his very Friends."

Of this Collection, which occupies a thin 4to., black letter, with a sonnet on each page, an admirable critical analysis has been given

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\* Edit. 1741. p. 157.      † Vol. ii. p. 238.      ‡ Vol. iv. p. 499.



by Sir Egerton Brydges, in the twelfth number of the *British Bibliographer*, accompanied by seventeen specimens of the sonnets, and from this critique, and from the *Theatrum Poetarum*, edited by the same elegant scholar, we have drawn our account, for the original is so scarce, as to be of hopeless acquisition.

It will strike the reader, in the first place, that the poems which Watson termed Sonnets, have no pretensions, in point of mechanism and form, to the character of the legitimate sonnet. Instead of the beautiful though artificial construction of the Petrarchan model, they consist of eighteen lines, including three quatrains in alternate rhyme, and a couplet appended to each quatrain; a system of verse totally destitute of the union and dignity which distinguish this branch of poetry in the practice of the Italians. It should be remarked, however, that our poet has occasionally given us a sonnet in Latin verse, in which he confines himself to fourteen lines, and, as he observes, in the Introduction to his sixth sonnet, "commeth somewhat neerer unto the Italian phrase than the English doth."\* Watson was, indeed, an elegant Latin poet, and in the matter prefixed to his first and sixth sonnets, informs us that he had written a poem "*De Remedio Amoris*," and that he was then "busied in translating Petrarch his sonnets into Latin,—which one day may perchance come to light."† In fact there appears to be more of true poetry in his Latin than in his English verse; for though to the "*Centurie of Love*" must be attributed great purity, correctness, and perspicuity of diction, and a versification uncommonly polished, harmonious, and well sustained, yet the soul of poetry, tenderness, simplicity, and energy of sentiment, will be found wanting. In their place Watson has bestowed upon us a multitude of metaphysical conceits, an exuberant store of classical mythology, and an abundance of learned allusion; but, to adopt the interesting observations of the critic mentioned in the preceding paragraph, "to meditate upon a subject,

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\* *British Bibliographer*, No. XII. p. 7.

† *Ibid.* p. 5. 7.

till it is broken into a thousand remote allusions and conceits; to accustom the mind to a familiarity with metaphysical subtleties and casual similitudes in contradictory objects, is to cultivate intellectual habits directly opposite to those from whence real poetry springs; and to produce effects directly opposite to those which real poetry is intended to produce.

“ The real poet does but pursue, fix, and heighten those day-dreams which every intellectual being more or less at times indulges; though the difference of the degree, as well as of the frequency, in which individuals indulge them, is incalculable; arising from the difference of mental talent and sensibility, as well as of cultivation. But who is there in whose fancy some absent image does not occasionally revive? And who is there so utterly dull and hard, that in him it arises unassociated with the slightest emotion of pain or pleasure? Yet in what abundance and richness of colouring such images are constantly springing up in the mind of the poet? Visions adhere to the boughs of every tree; and painting what he sees and feels with his natural enthusiasm, he carries the reader of sensibility along with him; kindles his fainter ideas into a flame; draws forth the yet weak impression into body and form; and irradiates his whole brain with his own light. The chords of the heart are touched; and while thus played upon produce enchanting music; till, as the spell is silent, the object of this borrowed inspiration is astonished to find, that all this brilliant entertainment sprung from the wand of the poetical magician.

“ If this be the secret of true poetry, what is he who seeks to convey images so unnatural, that no one had ever even an imperfect glimpse of them before, and no one can sympathize with them when expressed? Can he whose thoughts find no mirror in the minds of others be a poet? Is not a *metaphysical poet* a contradiction of terms?

“ He who adopts these principles, will think of Watson as I do. — Has he painted the natural emotions of the mind, or the heart? Has he given

“ A local habitation and a name”



to those ‘airy nothings’ which more or less haunt every fancy? Or has he not sat down rather to exercise the subtlety of his wit, than to discharge the fullness of his bosom?” \*

Yet has Watson, with these vital defects, been pronounced by Mr. Steevens superior as a sonneteer to Shakspeare†; a preference which we shall have occasion to consider in the chapter appropriated to the minor poems of our great dramatist.

Beside the “Hekatompathia,” Watson published, in 1581, a Latin translation of the *Antigone* of Sophocles; in 1582, “*Ad Olandum de Eulogiis serenissimæ nostræ Elizabethæ post Anglorum prælia cantatis, Decastichon*,” in 1586, a Paraphrase in Latin verse of the “*Raptus Helenæ*,” of Coluthus; in 1590, an English Version of Italian Madrigalls, and “*Melibœus*, a Latin Eclogue on the Death of Sir Francis Walsingham,” 4to.; in 1592, he printed “*Amintæ Gaudia*,” in hexameter verses, 4to.; and beside other fugitive pieces, two poems of his are inserted in the “*Phoenix Nest*,” 1593, and in “*England’s Helicon*,” 1600.

Watson has been highly praised by Nash‡, by Gabriel Harvey§, and by Meres; the latter asserting that “as Italy had Petrarch, so England had Thomas Watson.” || He is supposed to have died about the year 1595, for Nash, in his “*Have with you to Saffron Walden*,” printed in 1596, speaks of him as then deceased, adding, that “for all things he has left few his equals in England.”

38. WILLOBIE, HENRY. From the Preface of Hadrian Dorrell, to the first edition of Willobie’s “*Avisa*” in 1594, in which he terms the author, “a young man, and a scholar of very good hope,” there is foundation for conjecturing that our poet was born about the year 1565. It appears also from this prefatory matter that, “being desi-

\* British Bibliographer, No. XII. p. 3, 4.

† Reed’s Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 31.

‡ Epistle prefixed to Greene’s *Menaphon*.

§ *Four Letters and certaine Sonnets*, 1592.

|| *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 47.

rous to see the fashions of other countries for a time, he not long sithence departed voluntarily to her majestie's service," and that Dorrell, in his friend's absence, committed his poem to the press.\* He gave it the following title, "Willobie his Avisā; or the true picture of a modest Maide and of a chast and constant wife. In hexameter † verse. The like argument whereof was never heretofore published:" 4to. A second edition was published by the same editor in 1596, with an Apologie for the work, dated June 30, and concluding with the information, that the author was "of late gone to God." A fourth impression "corrected and augmented," consisting of 72 leaves 4to., made its appearance in 1609 ‡, with the addition of "the victorie of English Chastitie never before published," and subscribed "Thomas Willoby *frater Henrici Willoby nuper defuncti.*"

Mr. Haslewood conjectures from Dorrell's calling Willobie his *chamber-fellow*, and then dating his Preface from his chamber in

\* In the Apologie of Dorrell, dated 1596, and annexed to the second edition, he tells us, that "this poetical fiction was penned by the author at least for thirty and five yeares sithence." "If there was sufficient ground for this assertion," remarks Mr. Haslewood, "it fixes the time of the composition about 1561, and supposing the author then, as seems reasonable to presume, to have attained his twenty-first year, it places the time of his birth, as conjecturally fixed by Mr. Ellis, at 1540. However, some doubt arises whether this inference is not contradicted by the preface of 1594; which describes the author not only as 'a scholar of very good hope,' but also as a 'young man,' who, desirous of seeing the fashions of other countries, had, 'not long sithence,' departed voluntarily in Her Majesty's service. Here the most enlarged meaning bestowed on the expression 'not long sithence,' can neither explain the sentence that calls him a 'scholar of very good hope,' nor that of a 'young man,' whereby they shall be terms applicable to a person who had written thirty years before, and from the above inference might have been then in the fifty-fourth year of his age. It is probable the preface may be relied on; otherwise the author's departure from this country will be found too remote for the term of any voluntary engagement, civil or military, that could be attached to foreign service. Dorrell's subsequent anachronism may be ascribed to inadvertency: to a zealous, but hurried attempt to parry the attack of the critic, by the supposed youth of the writer; and by fixing the composition at a period sufficiently early to prevent an unfavourable comparison with more recent productions." *British Bibliographer*, No. XIV. p. 242.

† The term *hexameter* is here meant to designate stanzas consisting of *six lines*.

‡ Ritson dates this fourth impression 1609, but Mr. Haslewood 1605: see *Brit. Bibliogr.*, No. XIV. p. 241.



Oxford;" and from a passage in the "Avisa" itself, that our author was educated in that university, and that he was a native of Kent.\* We are told likewise by Dorrell, in his "Apologie," that his friend had written a poem entitled "Susanna," which still remained in manuscript.

The "Avisa," which consists of a great number of short cantos, is written to exemplify and recommend the character of a chaste woman, under all the temptations to which the various situations incident to her life, expose her. "In a void paper," says the editor, "rolled up in this book, I found this very name Avisa, written in great letters, a pretty distance asunder, and under every letter a word beginning with the same letter, in this forme:—

A.	V.	I.	S.	A.
Amans.	Vxor.	Inviolata.	Semper.	Amanda.

That is, in effect, A loving wife that never violated her faith is always to be beloved. Which makes me conjecture, that he minding for his recreation to set out the idea of a constant wife (rather describing what good wives should do than registering what any hath done,) devised a woman's name that might fitly expresse this woman's nature whom he would aime at: desirous in this (as I conjecture) to imitate a far off, either Plato in his commonwealth, or More in his Utopia."† Prefixed are two commendatory copies of verses, of which the second, signed *Contraria Contrariis*, is remarkable for an allusion to Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece," and will be noticed hereafter.

Of invention and enthusiasm, the poet's noblest boast, few traits are discoverable in the Avisa, nor can it display any vivid delineation of passion; but it occasionally unfolds a pleasing vein of description, and both the diction and metre are uniformly clear, correct, and flowing. Indeed, the versification may be pronounced, for the age in which it appeared, peculiarly sweet and well modulated, and the whole

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\* Brit. Bibliogr., No. XIV. p. 243. † Ibid., p. 245.

poem, in language and rhythm, makes a close approximation to modern usage.

39. WITHER, GEORGE. This very voluminous writer is introduced here, in consequence of his *Juvenilia*, which constitute the best of his works, having been all printed or circulated before the death of Shakespeare. He was born at Bentworth, near Alton in Hampshire, in 1590, and, after a long life of tumult, vicissitude, and disappointment, died in his seventy-eighth year in 1667. He continued to wield his pen to the last month of his existence, and more than one hundred of his pieces, in prose and verse, have been enumerated by Mr. Park in a very curious and elaborate catalogue of his works.\* We shall confine ourselves, however, for the reason already assigned, to that portion of his poetry which was in circulation previous to 1616.

It appears from Wither's own catalogue of his works †, that four of his earliest poems, entitled "Iter Hibernicum," "Iter Boreale," "Patrick's Purgatory," and "Philarete's Complaint," were lost in manuscript. The first of his published productions was printed in 1611, under the title of "*Abuses Stript and Whipt: or Satyricall Essays. Divided into two Bookes;*" 8vo., to which were annexed "The Scourge," a satire, and "Certaine Epigrams." This book, he tells us ‡, was written in 1611, and its unsparing severity involved him in persecution, and condemned him for several months to a prison. It was nevertheless highly popular, and underwent an eighth impression in 1633.

An elegant writer in the British Bibliographer has subjoined the following very just and interesting remarks to his notice of these poignant satires. "The reign of King James," he observes, "was not propitious to the higher orders of poetry. All those bold features, which nourished the romantic energies of the age of his predecessor, had been suppressed by the selfish pusillanimity and pedantic policy

\* Brit. Bibliogr., No. III. p. 17, et seq.

† At the end of his "*Fides Anglicanæ*," 1660.

‡ In his "*Warning-piece to London*," 1665.



of this inglorious monarch. Loving flattery and a base kind of luxurious ease, he was insensible to the ambitions of a gallant spirit, and preferred the cold and barren subtleties of scholastic learning to the breathing eloquence of those who were really inspired by the muse. Poetical composition therefore soon assumed a new character. Its exertions were now overlaid by learning, and the strange conceits of metaphysical wit took place of the creations of a pure and unsophisticated fancy. It was thus that Donne wasted in the production of unprofitable and short-lived fruit the powers of a most acute and brilliant mind. It was thus that Phineas Fletcher threw away upon an unmanageable subject the warblings of a copious and pathetic imagination. The understanding was more exercised in the ingenious distortion of artificial stores, than the faculties which mark the poet in pouring forth the visions of natural fiction.

“ Such scenes as youthful poets dream,  
On summer eve, by haunted stream,

were now deemed insipid. The Fairy Fables of Gorgeous Chivalry were thought too rude and boisterous, and too unphilosophical for the erudite ear of the book-learned king!

“ As writers of verse now brought their compositions nearer to the nature of prose, the epoch was favourable to the satyriacal class, for which so much food was furnished by the motley and vicious manners of the nation. Wither, therefore, bursting with indignation at the view of society which presented itself to his young mind, took this opportunity to indulge in a sort of publication, to which the prosaic taste of the times was well adapted; but he disdained, and, perhaps, felt himself unqualified, to use that glitter of false ornament, which was now substituted for the true decorations of the muse. ‘I have arrived,’ says he\*, ‘to be as plain as a pack-saddle.’ — ‘Though you understand them not, yet because you see this wants some *fine phrases and*

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\* Vide Preface to “Abuses Stript and Whipt.”

*flourishes*, as you find other men's writings stuffed withal, perhaps you will judge me unlearned.'—' Yet I could with ease have amended it ; for it cost me, I protest, more labour to observe this plainness, than if I had more poetically trimmed it.' " \*

The plainness of which Wither here professes himself to have been studious, forms one of the noblest characteristics of his best writings. Dismissing with contempt the puerilities and conceits which deformed the pages of so many of his contemporaries, he cultivated, with almost uniform assiduity, a simplicity of style, and an expression of natural sentiment and feeling, which have occasioned the revival of his choicest compositions in the nineteenth century †, and will for ever stamp them with a permanent value.

Returning to his *Juvenilia*, we find that in 1612 he published in a thin quarto, "*Prince Henrie's Obsequies ; or mournfull Elegies upon his Death. With a supposed Interlocution betweene the Ghost of Prince Henry and Great Britaine ;*" which was followed the succeeding year by his "*Epithalamia : or Nuptiall Poemes,*" 4to., on the marriage of Frederick the Fifth, with Elizabeth, only daughter of James the First. These pieces have been re-printed, by Sir Egerton Brydges, in his "*Restituta :*" the *Obsequies* contain forty-five elegiac sonnets, succeeded by an *Epitaph*, the *Interlocution*, and a *Sonnet of Death*, in Latin rhymes, with a paraphrastic translation. Among the numerous sonnet-writers of the age of Shakspeare, Wither claims a most respectable place, and many of these little elegies deserve a rescue from oblivion. We would particularly point out Nos. 14 and 17, from which an admirable sonnet might be formed by subjoining six lines of the former to the first two quatuorzains of the latter, and this without

\* Brit. Bibliogr., No. I. p. 4, 5.

† A Selection from Wither's Works, in three volumes 8vo., was promised, five years ago, by a gentleman of Bristol. In 1785 Mr. Alexander Dalrymple published Extracts from his *Juvenilia*; and "*Fidelia*," "*Faire Virtue*," "*The Shepherd's Hunting*," and "*Abuses Stript and Whipt*," are now separately reprinting from the press of Longman and Co.—October 1814.



the alteration of a syllable; the *octave* will then consist of a soliloquy by the poet himself, and the *sestain* be addressed to Elizabeth the sister of Prince Henry; a transition which is productive of a striking and happy effect:—

“ Thrice happy had I been, if I had kept  
 Within the circuit of some little Village,  
 In ignorance of Courts and Princes slept,  
 Manuring of an honest halfe-plough tillage:  
 Or else, I would I were as young agen  
 As when *Eliza*, our last *Phœnix* died;  
 My childish yeares had not conceived then  
 What ’twas to lose a Prince so dignified:—  
 Thy brother’s well: and would not change estates  
 With any prince that reigns beneath the skie:  
 No, not with all the world’s great potentates:  
 His plumes have born him to eternitie!—  
 He shall escape (for so th’ Almighty wills)  
 The stormy Winter of ensuing ills.” \*

In 1614, our author published “ *A Satyre written to the King’s most excellent Majestie*,” 8vo.; and “ *The Shepherds Pipe*,” 8vo.; the latter, a production of high poetical merit, having being composed in conjunction with Browne, the author of *Britannia’s Pastorals*.

In 1615, appeared “ *The Shepherds Hunting: Being certaine Eglogues, written during the time of the Author’s imprisonment in the Marshalsey*,” 8vo. This was intended as a continuation of the “ *Shepherd’s Pipe*,” and is fully equal, if not superior, to the prior portion: Phillips, indeed, speaking of Wither, says, “ the most of poetical fancy, which I remember to have found in any of his writings, is in a little piece of pastoral poetry, called *The Shepherd’s Hunting*.” †

The next work with which Wither favoured us, though not published for *general* circulation before 1619, yet, as the stationer,

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\* *Restituta*, No. VI. p. 394, 395.

† *Theatrum Poetarum*, edition of 1675.

George Norton, tells us, had been "long since imprinted for the use of the author, to bestow on such as had voluntarily requested it *in way of adventure*;" words which seem to intimate, that it had been dispersed for the purpose of *pecuniary* return, and probably with the intent of supporting the bard during his imprisonment in the Marshalsea. It has accordingly a title-page which implies a second impression, and is termed "*Fidelia*. Newly corrected and augmented." This is a work which ought to have protected the memory of Wither from the sarcasms of Butler, Swift, and Pope; for it displays a vein of poetry at once highly elegant, impassioned, and descriptive. To *Fidelia* was first annexed the two exquisite songs, reprinted by Dr. Percy, commencing

" Shall I, wasting in dispaire,"

and

" Hence away, thou Syren, leave me." \*

We shall close the list of those works of Wither that fall within the era to which we are limited, by noticing his "*Faire Virtue: the Mistresse of Phil'arete*," 8vo. This beautiful production, glowing with all the ardours of a poetic fancy, was one of his earliest compositions, and is alluded to in his "Satire to the King," in 1614, before which period there is reason to suppose it was widely circulated in manuscript; for in a prefatory epistle to the copy of 1622, published by John Grismand, but which was originally prefixed to an anonymous edition printed by John Marriot, and not now supposed to be in existence, Wither tells us, that "the poem was composed many years ago, and, unknown to the author, got out of his custody by an acquaintance;" and he adds, "when I first composed it, I well liked thereof, and it well enough became my years." To high praise of this work in its poetical capacity, Mr. Dalrymple has annexed the

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\* Reliques, vol. iii., 4th edit, p. 190—264.



important remark, that it unfolds a more perfect system of female tuition than is any where else to be discovered.

The great misfortune of Wither was, that the multitude of his subsequent publications, many of which were written during the effervescence of party zeal, and are frequently debased by coarse and vulgar language, overwhelmed the merits of his earlier productions. Yet it must be conceded, that his prose, during the whole period of his authorship, generally exhibits great strength, perspicuity, and freedom from affectation; and on the best of his poetical effusions we may cheerfully assent to the following encomium of an able and impartial judge:—

“ If poetry be the power of commanding the imagination, conveyed in measure and expressive epithets, Wither was truly a poet. Perhaps there is no where to be found a greater variety of English measure than in his writings, (Shakspeare excepted,) more energy of thought, or more frequent developement of the delicate filaments of the human heart.” \*

40. WOTTON, SIR HENRY. This elegant scholar and accomplished gentleman was forty-eight years of age when Shakspeare died, being born at Boughton-Hall in Kent, in 1568. His correspondence with Milton on the subject of *Comus* in 1638, is on record, and it is highly probable that, on his return from the continent in 1598, after a long residence of nine years in Germany and Italy, he would not long remain a stranger either to the reputation or the person of the great Dramatic Luminary of his times.

Having mentioned these great poets as contemporaries of Sir Henry Wotton, it may be a subject of pleasing speculation to conjecture how far they could be personally known to each other. The possibility of some intercourse of this kind, though transient, seems to have forcibly struck the mind of an elegant poet and critic of the

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\* Dalrymple's Extracts from Wither's *Juvenilia*, 1785.

present day ; speaking of Comus, presented at Ludlow-Castle in 1634, he remarks, — “ Much it has appeared to me of the *Shakspearean* diction and numbers and form of sentiment may be traced in this admirable and delightful Drama : in which the streams of the *Avon* mix with those of the *Arno*, of the *Mincius*, and the *Ilissus*. Part of MILTON’S affectionate veneration, beside what arises from congenial mind, may have arisen from *personal* respect. At the *death* of SHAKSPEARE, MILTON was in his *eighth* year.

——— “ Heroum laudes et facta Parentum  
Jam legere, et quæ sit poterat cognoscere Virtus.”

“ It is hardly probable that they never met. SHAKSPEARE, if they did see each other, could not but be charmed with the countenance and manners of a boy like MILTON : and MILTON, whose mind was never childish, and whose countenance at ten has the modest but decisive character of his high destiny, would feel the interview : his young heart would dilate, and every recollection would bring SHAKSPEARE, once seen and heard, to his remembrance and imagination with increasing force.” \*

The most powerful circumstance which militates against this interesting supposition, is, that, if such an interview had taken place, we should, in all probability, have found it recorded in the minor poems, Latin or English, of Milton, who has there preserved many of the occurrences of his youthful days, and would scarcely have failed, we think, to put the stamp of immortality on such an event.

The poetry of Wotton, though chiefly written for the amusement of his leisure, and through the excitement of casual circumstances, possesses the invaluable attractions of energy, simplicity, and the most touching morality ; it comes warm from the heart, and whether employed on an amatory or didactic subject, makes its appropriate impression with an air of sincerity which never fails to delight. Of

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\* “ *Laura: or an Anthology of Sonnets.*” By Capel Lofft. 5 vols. Preface, vol. i. p. cxliv. cxlv.



this description are the pieces entitled, "A Farewell to the Vanities of the World;" the "Character of a Happy Life," and the Lines on the Queen of Bohemia. One of his earliest pieces, being "written in his youth," was printed in Davison's "Poetical Rapsody," 1602, and his Remains were collected and published by his amiable friend Isaac Walton. Sir Henry died, Provost of Eton, in December 1639, in the seventy-third year of his age.

In drawing up these Critical Notices of the principal poets who, independent of the Drama, flourished during the life-time of Shakespeare, we have been guided chiefly by the consideration of their positive merit, or great incidental popularity; and few, if any, who, on these bases, call for admission, have probably been overlooked. There is one poet, however, whose memory has been preserved by Phillips, and of whom, from the high character given of him by this critic, it may be necessary to say a few words; for if the following eulogium on the compositions of this writer be not the result of a marked partiality, it should stimulate to an ardent enquiry after manuscripts so truly valuable.

"JOHN LANE, a fine old Queen Elizabeth's gentleman, who was living within my remembrance, and whose several Poems, had they not had the ill fate to remain unpublisht, when much better meriting than many, that are in print, might possibly have gained him a name not much inferior, if not equal to Drayton, and others of the next rank to Spencer; but they are all to be produc't in manuscript, namely his '*Poetical Vision*,' his '*Alarm to the Poets*,' his '*Twelve Months*,' his '*Guy of Warwick, a Heroic Poem*' (at least as much as many others that are so entitled), and lastly his '*Supplement to Chaucer's Squire's Tale*.' " \*

It has happened unfortunately for Lane, that the only specimen of his writings which has met the eye of a modern critic, has proved a source of disappointment. Warton, after recording that a copy of

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\* Theatrum Poetarum apud Brydges, p. 318, 319.

Lane's supplement to Chaucer existed in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, adds, "I conceived great expectations of him on reading Phillips's account. But I was greatly disappointed, for Lane's performance, upon perusal, proved to be not only an inartificial imitation of Chaucer's manner, but a weak effort of invention."\* This discovery, however, should not arrest all future research; for his four preceding poems, of which the latter two must necessarily, from their titles, be of considerable length, may yet warrant the decision of Phillips. †

To this brief summary of Master-Bards we shall now subjoin, in a tabular and alphabetic form, a catalogue of those numerous minor poets who were content to follow in the train of more splendid talent. In carrying this arrangement into execution it will not be necessary, after the example of Ritson, to dignify with the name of poet every

\* Observations on Spenser, vol. i. p. 155, 156.

† It may be useful in this note, to place, in immediate juxtaposition, the names of the Poets whom we have thus enumerated, as leaders of a great portion of their Art, during a period of half a century.

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Beaumont, Sir John. | 21. Harrington.  |
| 2. Breton.             | 22. Jonson.      |
| 3. Browne.             | 23. Lodge.       |
| 4. Chalkhill.          | 24. Marlow.      |
| 5. Chapman.            | 25. Marston.     |
| 6. Churchyard.         | 26. Niccols.     |
| 7. Constable.          | 27. Raleigh.     |
| 8. Daniel.             | 28. Sackville.   |
| 9. Davies.             | 29. Southwell.   |
| 10. Davors.            | 30. Spenser.     |
| 11. Donne.             | 31. Stirling.    |
| 12. Drayton.           | 32. Sydney.      |
| 13. Drummond.          | 33. Sylvester.   |
| 14. Fairfax.           | 34. Turberville. |
| 15. Fitzgeffrey.       | 35. Tusser.      |
| 16. Fletcher, Giles.   | 36. Warner.      |
| 17. Fletcher, Phineas. | 37. Watson.      |
| 18. Gascoigne.         | 38. Willobie.    |
| 19. Greene.            | 39. Wither.      |
| 20. Hall.              | 40. Wotten.      |

Lane.



individual who contributed a single copy of verses, as a tribute to contemporary merit—a prostitution of the title which appears truly ridiculous; for though bulk be no proof of excellence, yet were we to assign the name of poet to every penner of a stanza, the majority of those who barely read and write, might be included in the list. To those alone, therefore, who either published themselves, or had their productions thrown into a collective form by others, will the appellation be allotted.

With a view to simplicity and brevity, the Table will consist but of three parts; the first, occupied by the names of the poets; the second, by abbreviated titles of their works, with their dates; and the third, in order to prevent the frequent repetition of similar epithets, will contain arbitrary marks, designative of the general merit of their writings, and forming a kind of graduated scale. Thus *mediocrity* will be designated by a broad black line (■); *excellence* will be expressed by eight asterisks before the mark of mediocrity, (\*\*\*\*\*■), and absolute *worthlessness* by eight after it (■\*\*\*\*\*); while the intermediate shades of merit will be sufficiently pointed out by the intervening asterisks. Occasional *notes*, where peculiarity of any kind may call for them, will be added.

On this plan of *tabular* construction, the tediousness of a mere catalogue will, in a great measure, be avoided; and, at the same time, an adequately accurate view be given of the multiplicity and diffusion of poetical composition which pervaded this fertile period.

*TABLE of Minor Miscellaneous Poets, during the Age of SHAKSPEARE.*

SCALE.

Excellence.                      Mediocrity.                      Absolute  
Worthlessness.

\*\*\*\*\*|\*\*\*\*\*

- ACHELEY, THOMAS. "*A most lamentable and tragical Historie.*" 12mo. - - - - - 1576
- A translation from a novel of Bandello - - - - - \*
- ANDERSON, JAMES. *Ane godly treatis*, calit the first and second cumming of Christ, with the tone of the wintersnycht. 16mo. Edin. - - - - - 1595 \*
- ANDREWE, THOMAS. *The Unmasking of a feminine Machiavell.* 4to. - - - - - 1604 \*
- ANNESON, JAMES. *Carolana*, that is to say, a Poeme in Honour of our King, Charles-James, Queen Anne, and Prince Charles, &c. 4to. - - - - - 1614
- ARTHINGTON, HENRY. *Principall Points of Holy Profession.* 4to. - - - - - 1607 \*\*
- ASKE, JAMES. *Elizabetha Triumphans.* 4to. Blank Verse. 1588 \*
- AVALE, LEMEKE. *A Commemoration or Dirge* of bastarde Edmonde Boner. 8vo. - - - - - 1659
- BALNEVIS, HENRY. *Confession of Faith*, conteining how the troubled man should seeke refuge at his God. 12mo. Edin. - - - - - 1584
- BARNEFIELDE, RICHARD. *Cynthia* with certeyne Sonnettes and the Legend of Cassandra. - - - - - 1594



- The Affectionate Shepherd.* 16mo. † - - 1595 \* |
- The Encomion of Lady Pecunia.* 4to. - - 1598 |
- BARNES, BARNABE. *Parthenophil and Parthenope.* Sonnettes,  
Madrigals, Elegies and Odes. - - 1593 \* |
- A Divine Centurie of Spirituall Sonnettes.* ‡ - 1595 \* |
- BASTARD, THOMAS. *Chrestoleros.* Seven Books of Epi-  
grams. 8vo. § - - - - - 1595 \* |
- BATMAN, STEPHEN. *The Travayled Pylgrime.* 4to. - 1569 | \*\*\*
- BEVERLEY, PETER. *The History of Ariodanto and Jeneura.*  
8vo. 2d edit. From Ariosto. - - - 1600 |
- BIESTON, ROGER. *The Bayte and Snare of Fortune.* Folio.  
ten leaves. No date. ||
- BLENERHASSET, THOMAS. *The Seconde Part of the Mirrour*  
*for Magistrates.* 4to. - - - - - 1578 | \*
- BOURCHER, ARTHUR. *A Fable of Æsop Versified.* 8vo. 1566
- BOURMAN, NICHOLAS. *A Friendelie Well Wishinge* to such  
as endure. A Ballad. - - - - - 1581
- BRADSHAW, THOMAS. *The Shepherd's Starre.* 4to. - 1591
- BRATHWAYTE, RICHARD. *The Golden Fleece,* with other  
poems. Sm. 8vo. - - - - - 1611 |

† "Here, through the course of twenty sonnets, not inelegant, and which were exceedingly popular, the poet bewails his unsuccessful love for a beautiful youth, by the name of Ganymede, in a strain of the most tender passion, yet with professions of the chastest affection." Warton's Hist. vol. iii. p. 405.—It was the fashion, at this period, to imitate the second Eclogue of Virgil.

‡ The Sonnets of Barnes, which are written in strict adherence to the recurring *rima* of the Italian school, frequently possess no inconsiderable beauties. The Sonnet on Content, selected by Mr. Beloe (vol. ii. p. 78.), from Parthenophil, is highly pleasing and harmonious, and at least twenty of his centenary may be pronounced, both in imagery and versification, above mediocrity.

§ Sheppard, in his Poems, 1651, remarks that "none in England, save Bastard and Harington, have divulged epigrams worth notice." A beautiful specimen of his Epigrams is given by Mr. Park, in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iv. p. 375.

|| To this poet, Nash dedicated his "Strange Newes," &c. 1592, in the subsequent curious terms: "To the most copious carminist of our time, and famous persecutor of Priscian, his verie friend maister *Apis lapis*."—Vide Ritson, p. 131. note.

- The Poets Willow, or the Passionate Shepherd.* 8vo. 1614 ■
- A Strappado for the Divell.* Epigrams and Satyres. 8vo. - 1615 ■
- BRICE, THOMAS. *The Courte of Venus Moralized.* - 1567
- Songes and Sonnettes.* - 1567
- BROUGHTON, ROWLAND. *A Briefe Discourse of the Lyfe and Death of the late Right High and Hon<sup>ble</sup> Sir Will<sup>m</sup> Pawlet, Knight.* - 1572. ■\*\*
- BROOKE, THOMAS. *Certayne Verses in the time of his imprisonment, the day before his deathe.* Norwich. - 1570
- BROOKE, CHRISTOPHER. *Elegy on Prince Henry.* - 1613
- Eclogues.* Dedicated to W<sup>m</sup> Browne. † - 1614 ■
- BRYSKETT, LODOWICK. *The Mourning Muses of Lod. Bryskett upon the deathe of the most noble Sir Philip Sydney knight.* † - 1587 \* ■
- BUC, SIR GEORGE. *Δαφνις Πολυστεφανος.* An Eclog treating of Crownes, and of Garlandes, and to whom of right they appertaine. 4to. - 1605 \* ■

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† For an account of this author, see *British Bibliographer*, No. VIII. p. 235. In this, as in other instances, I have only inserted the pieces published during the life of Shakspeare.

‡ Two pieces by this writer, entitled "The Mourning Muse of Thestylis," and "A Pastorall Aeglogue upon the Death of Sir Philip Sidney," have been inserted in *Spenser's Works* (Todd's edit. vol. viii. p. 66. et seq.), and probably form the contents of "The Mourning Muses." He is described by Spenser as a swain

"Of gentle wit and daintie sweet device,"

and if, as Ritson asserts, (*Bibliograph. Poet.* p. 146,) "we probably owe much that has descended to us of the incomparable "Faery Queen," to this poet, we are greatly his debtors indeed. That Bryskett had importuned his friend for the continuance of his immortal poem, is evident from Spenser's thirty-third sonnet, which pleads, as an excuse, disappointment in love, and closes with the following petitionary couplet:—

"Cease then, till she vouchsafe to grawnt me rest;  
Or lend you me another living breast."

Vol. viii. p. 137.

Bryskett succeeded Spenser as Clerk of the Council of Munster.



- CAREW, RICHARD. "*Godfrey of Bulloigne*, or the Recovery of Hierusalem." First Five Cantos translated from Tasso. First edition, no date.  
Second, 4to. - - - - - 1594 | \*
- CARPENTER, JOHN. *A Sorrowfull Song* for sinfull soules.  
8vo. - - - - - 1586
- CHESTER, ROBERT. "*Loves Martyr*, or Rosalins Complaint." From the Italian of Torquato Cœliano.  
"With the true Legend of famous King Arthur." † - - - - - 1601 | \*
- CHETTLER, HENRY. *The Pope's pitiful Lamentation* for the death of his deere darling Don Joan of Austria. 4to. - - - - - 1578  
"*The Forest of Fancy*." Consisting of apothegmes, histories, songs, sonnets, and epigrams. 4to.  
1579  
*A Dolefull Ditty* or sorowful sonet of the Lord Darly, some time King of Scots. - - - 1579 |
- CHUTE, ANTHONY. *Beawtie Dishonoured*, written under the title of Shore's Wife. 4to. - - - - - 1593  
*Procris and Cephalus*. ‡ - - - - - 1593 | \*
- CLAPHAM, HENOCK. *A Brieft of the Bible's History*; Drawne first into English poesy. 8vo. Edin. - 1596 | \*\*\*\*
- COPLEY, ANTHONY. *Loves Owle*: an idle conceited Dialogue betwene Love and an Olde-man. 4to.  
1595  
*A Fig for Fortune*. 4to. - - - - - 1596 | \*\*
- COTTESFORD, THOMAS. *A Prayer to Dannyell*. - 1570

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† To these poems by Chester, are added on the first subject, which, he tells us, "allegorically shadows the truth of love, in the constant fate of the phoenix and turtle," poems by Shakspeare, Jonson, Marston, Chapman, and others.—Vide Ritson, p. 159.

‡ Ritson remarks,— "This is probably the poem alluded to in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*:—

"Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true,  
As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you." *Shakspeare* Page 170.

- COTTON, ROGER. *An Armor of Prooffe*, brought from the  
Tower of David. 4to. - - - 1596  
*A Spirituall Song*. 4to. - - - 1596
- CULROSE, ELIZABETH. *Ane Godly Dream*. 4to. Edin. 1603
- CUTWODE, T. *Caltha-poetarum*, or the Bumble Bee, 4to.  
1599
- DAVIDSTONE, JOHNE. *Ane Brief Commendation* of Up-  
richtnes, &c. in Inglis Meter. 4to. - 1573  
*A Memorial of the Life and Death* of two worthye  
Chrirtians. In English Meter. 8vo. - 1595
- DAVIES, JOHN. *The Scourge of Folly*. Consisting of saty-  
ricall Epigramms, &c. 8vo. - 1611  
*Humours Heavn on Earth*. - - - 1605  
*Microcosmos*. The Discovery of the Little World,  
with the government thereof. 4to. - - 1603  
*The Muses Sacrifice*; or Divine Meditations. 12mo.  
1612  
*Wittes Pilgrimage*, (by Poeticall Essaies,) Through  
a World of amorous Sonnets, &c. 4to. † 16  
*A Select Second Husband* for Sir Thos. Overburie's  
Wife. Small 8vo. - - - 1616  
*Mirum in Modum*. † - - - 1602
- DAVISON, FRANCIS. } *Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigals, and*  
DAVISON, WALTER, } *Epigrams*, by Francis and Walter  
Davison, brethren. 12mo. § - - - 1602 \*

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† That Wittes Pilgrimage was written before 1611, is evident from its being alluded to in his *Scourge for Paper-Persecutors*: annexed to the *Scourge of Folly*, printed in this year.

‡ Beside these productions here enumerated, Davies published, in 1617, "*Wits Bedlam*," 8vo.; containing not less than 400 Epigrams, and about 80 Epitaphs. This writer usually designated himself by the title of *John Davies of Hereford*. — See *Censura Literaria*, vols. i. ii. v. vi. *Brit. Bibliographer*, No. VIII., *Beloe's Anecdotes*, vol. ii., and *Wood's Athenæ Oxon.* vol. i. p. 445. He also wrote *The Holy Rood, or Christ's Crosse*, 1609.

§ These poetical brothers published their poems with the above title, in a valuable Collection of Metrical Miscellanies, called "*A Poetical Rapsodie*," 1602, which will be



- DELONÉ, THOMAS. *Strange Histories*, or songes and sonnets  
of kinges, princes, dukes, lords, ladyes, knights,  
and gentlemen : &c. 4to. † - 1612 | \*
- DERRICKE, JOHN. *The Image of Irelande*. 4to. - - 1581 | \*
- DOWRICKE, ANN. *The French Historie*. 4to. - - 1589
- DRANT, THOMAS. *A Medicinable Morall*, that is, the two  
bookes of Horace his satyres, englyshed, &c.  
4to. - - 1566
- Horace his Arte of Poetrie*, pistles, and satyres, en-  
glished, 4to. - - 1567
- Greg. *Nazianzen*, his epigrammes, and spirituall  
sentences. 8vo. ‡ - - 1568 | \*
- EDWARDES, C. *The Mansion of Myrthe* - - 1581
- ELDERTON, WILLIAM. *Elderton's Solace* in tyme of his sick-  
ness, contayning sundrie sonets upon many  
pithe parables. - - 1578 | \*
- Various Ballads* from 1560 to § - - 1590 | \*
- ELVIDEN, EDMOND. *The Closet of Counselles*. Translated

noticed hereafter. They are introduced in the Table as being the principal contributors, and as distinguishing their pieces by a separate title or division.

† This writer was the most popular ballad-maker of his day; he was by trade a silk-weaver, and the compiler of various Garlands, under the titles of "The Garland of Good Will;" "The Garland of Delight," &c. &c. Nash, in his "Have with you to Saffron-Walden," 1596, says, that "his muse from the first peeping forth, hath stood at livery at an alehouse wispe, never exceeding a penny a quart day nor night; and this deere yeare, together with the silencing of his looms, scarce that; he being constrained to betake himself to carded ale: whence it proceedeth, that since *Candlemas*, or his jigge of *John for the King*, not one merrie dittie will come from him, but *The thunder-bolt against swearers*, *Repent England repent*, and *The strange judgements of God*."

‡ Drant was a copious Latin Poet, having published two miscellanies under the titles of *Sylva*, and *Poemata Varia*.

§ A quotation from one of the songs or ballads of this drunken rhymer, is to be found in *Much Ado about Nothing*, (Reed's Shakspeare, vol. vi. p. 196.) commencing

"The god of love,  
That sits above."

- and collected out of divers aucthors into English  
verse. 8vo. - 1569
- The History of Pisistratus and Catanea.* 12mo.
- EVANS, LEWES. *The Fyrste twoo Satars or Poyes of Orace.*  
1564
- EVANS, WILLIAM. *Thamesiades, or Chastities Triumph.* 8vo.  
† 1602 \*|
- FENNER, DUDLEY. *The Song of Songs.* Translated out of  
the Hebrue into Englishe Meeter. 8vo. - 1587
- FENNOR, WILLIAM. *Fennor's Descriptions.* 4to. ‡ - 1616. |\*
- FERRERS, GEORGE. *Legends of Dame Eleanor Cobham and*  
*Humfrey Plantagenet—in the Myrrour for*  
*Magistrates,* edition § - - - 1578 |\*
- FETHERSTONE, CHRISTOPHER. *The Lamentations of Jeremie,*  
*in prose and meeter, with apt notes to singe*  
*them withall.* 8vo. - - - 1587
- FLEMING, ABRAHAM. *The Bucolikes of P. Virgilius Maro,*  
*with alphabeticall annotations.* - - - 1575 |\*
- The Georgiks or Ruralls: conteyning four books.*  
4to. || - - - - - 1589 |\*
- FLETCHER, ROBERT. *An Epitaph or brieve Lamentation for*  
*the late Queene.* 4to. - - - - - 1603
- FRAUNCE, ABRAHAM. *The Lamentations of Amintas for the*

† This poem, of which a prior edition is noticed in *Censura Literaria*, vol. v. p. 349, as published in 4to. 1600, is conjectured by Ritson, p. 201, to have been the production of William Evans, who is well known to the lovers of old English poetry, by his eulogium prefixed to the first edition of Spenser's "Faerie Queene," 1590. The *Thamesiades*, which consists of three books or cantos, is written with vigour, and exhibits some pleasing poetical pictures.

‡ This thin volume of 22 leaves, consists of seven poetical speeches "spoken before the King and Queens most excellent Majestie, the Prince his highnesse, and the Lady Elizabeth's Grace."

§ He contributed also to the previous editions of 1559 and 1563.

|| The "Georgiks" were added to a new version of the "Bucolikes," forming one volume, 4to. Both are in regular Alexandrines without rhyme.



- death of Phillis: paraphrastically translated out  
of Latine into English hexameters. 4to. 1588 |\*
- "*The Arcadian Rhetoricke.*" Verse and Prose. 8vo.  
1588 |\*
- The Countess of Pembroke's Emanuel.* Containing  
the nativity, passion, burial, and resurrection  
of Christ: together with certaine psalmes of  
David. 4to. - - - 1591 |\*
- The Countesse of Pembroke's Ivychurch.* Containing  
the affectionate life, and unfortunate death of  
Phillis and Amyntas. 4to. † - - - 1591 |\*
- The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Ivy-  
church: entitled: Amintas Dale.* 4to. - 1592 |\*
- Heliodorus's Ethiopics.* 8vo. ‡ - - - 1591 |\*
- FREEMAN, THOMAS. *Rub and a Great Cast: and Runne, and  
a Great Cast. The second bowle. In 200  
Epigrams.* 4to. § - - - 1614 |
- FULWELL, ULPIAN. *The Flower of Fame.* Containing the  
bright Renowne, and most fortunate raigne of  
King Henry the viij. 4to. - - - 1575 |\*\*
- GALE, DUNSTAN. *Pyramus and Thisbe.* || - - - 1597 \*|

† This production consists of a pastoral and an elegy; the former being a translation of the *Aminta* of Tasso.

‡ Fraunce also published in a work of his, entitled "*The Lawyers Logicke*," 1588, an hexameter version of Virgil's *Alexis*. His affectation of Latin metres has condemned him to oblivion; for as Phillips justly remarks, "they neither become the English, nor any other modern language." — Edit. apud Brydges, p. 109.

§ Wood tells us (*Ath. Oxon.* vol. i. p. 398.), that Freeman was held in esteem by Donne, Daniel, Chapman, and Shakspeare; and to these poets, and to Spenser, he has addressed epigrams. For numerous specimens of this poet, see Warton, vol. iv., Ellis, and Park in *Censura Lit.* vol. iv. p. 129.

|| This poem was afterwards annexed to Greene's "*History of Arbasto*," 1617, where it is termed "a lovely poem." It was reprinted in 1626. On Greene's authority, I have ranked it beyond mediocrity.

- GAMAGE, WILLIAM. *Linsi-Woolsie: or Two Centuries of Epigrammes*. 12mo. † - - - 1613 \*\*\*\*\*
- GARTER, BARNARD. *The Tragicall History of two English Lovers*. 8vo. - - - 1565
- GIFFORD, HUMPHREY. *A Posie of Gilloflowers*, eche differing from other in colour and odour, yet all sweete. 4to. - - - 1580 \*|
- GOLDING, ARTHUR. *The xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso*, entytuled Metamorphosis, a worke very pleasant and delectable. 4to. - - 1567 \*|
- GOOGE, BARNABY. *The Zodiake of Life*, written by the godly and learned poet Marcellus Pallingenius Stellatus, wherein are conteyned twelve bookes. Newly translated into English Verse. 4to. 1565 |
- The Popish Kingdome*, or reigne of Antichrist. Written in Latine verse by Thomas Naogeorgus, and Englyshed by Barnaby Googe. 4to. ‡ 1570 |
- The overthrow of the Gowte*: written in Latin verse, by Chr. Balista, translated by B. G. 8vo. § - - - 1577 |
- GORDON, PATRICK. *The Famous History of the Valiant Bruce*, in heroic verse. 4to. - - 1615 \*|
- GORGES, SIR ARTHUR. *The Olympian Catastrophe*, dedicated to the memory of the most heroicall Lord

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† A collection which consists, observes Mr. Park, "of the saddest trash that ever assumed the name of Epigrams; and which, with a very slight alteration, well merits the sarcasm bestowed by Shenstone on the poems of a Kidderminster bard: —

"Thy verses, friend, are *linsey woolsey* stuff,  
And we must own — you've measur'd out enough."

Censura Lit. vol. v. p. 348.

‡ The "Popish Kingdome" consists of four books, of which the last contains a curious and interesting description of feasts, holidays, and Christmas games; including, of course, many of the customs, and almost all the amusements of the period in which it was written.

§ Besides these works, Googe published in 1563, "Eglogs, Epitaphs, and Sonnets," 12mo.



- Henry, late illustrious Prince of Wales, &c.  
 By Sir Arthur Gorges, Knight, † - 1612  
*Lucan's Pharsalia*. containing the Civill Warres  
 betweene Cæsar and Pompey. Written in La-  
 tine Heroicall Verse by M. Annæus Lucanus.  
 Translated into English verse by Sir Arthur  
 Gorges, Knight. ‡ - - - - 1614 \* |
- GOSSON, STEPHEN. *Speculum Humanum*. In stanzas of  
 eleven lines. § - - - - 1580 |
- GRANGE, JOHN. *His Garden*: pleasant to the eare and  
 delightful to the reader, if he abuse not the  
 scent of the floures. 4to. || - - - - 1577 |\*
- GREENE, THOMAS. *A Poets Vision* and a Prince's Glorie.  
 4to. - - - - 1603

† "A Poem in manuscript, of considerable length, together with some Sonnets, preserved amongst numerous treasures of a similar nature, which belonged to the late Duke of Bridgewater, and now belong to the Marquis of Stafford."—Todd's Spenser, vol. i. p. 87. Mr. Todd has given us a specimen of Sir Arthur's talents, by the production of a Sonnet from this manuscript treasure, which indicates no common genius, and induces us to wish for the publication of the whole.

‡ Sir Arthur was the intimate friend of Spenser, who lamented the death of Lady Gorges in a beautiful elegy entitled "Daphnaida:" he has recorded, likewise, the conjugal affection and the talents of her husband, under the name of *Alcyon*, in the following elegant lines:—

"And there is sad Alcyon, bent to mourne,  
 Though fit to frame an everlasting dittie,  
 Whose gentle spright for Daphne's death doth tourne  
 Sweet layes of love to endlesse plaints of pittie.  
 Ah pensive boy, pursue that brave conceipt,  
 In thy sweet eglantine of Meriflure,  
 Lift up thy notes unto their wonted height,  
 That may thy Muse and mates to mirth allure."

Todd's Spenser, vol. viii. p. 23.

§ This poem was printed, says Ritson, at the end of Kenton's "Mirror of man's life," 1580. Gosson is introduced here in consequence of the celebrity attributed to him by Wood, who declares, that "for his admirable penning of pastorals, he was ranked with Sir P. Sidney, Tho. Chaloner, Edm. Spenser, Abrah. Fraunce, and Rich. Bernfield."

|| This forms the second part of a work by the same writer, called "The Golden Aphroditis," and consists of 19 pieces, four of which are in prose.

- GREEPE, THOMAS. *The true and perfect Newes* of the woorthy and valiaunt exploytes, performed and doone by that valiant knight Syr Frauncis Drake. 4to. † - - - 1587 | \*
- GREVILLE, SIR FULKE. Poems, viz.  
*Cælica*, a collection of 109 songs. - - - |  
*A Treatise of Human Learning*, in 150 stanzas. |  
*Upon Fame and Honour*, in 86 stanzas. - |  
*A Treatise of Wars*, in 68 stanzas. - |  
*Remains*, consisting of political and philosophical poems. - - - |  
*Poems in England's Helicon*. † - - 1600 |
- GRIFFIN, B. "*Fidessa, more chaste than kinde.*" A collection of amatory sonnets. 12mo. - - 1596
- GRIFFITH, WILLIAM. The Epitaph of the worthie Knight Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of Wales. Small 8vo. - - - 1591 | \*
- GROVE, MATTHEW. *The most famous and tragical historie* of Pelops and Hippodamia. Whereunto are adjoyned sundrie pleasant devises, epigrams, songes, and sonnettes. 8vo. - - 1587
- GRYMESTON, ELIZABETH. *Miscellanea*—Meditations—Memoratives. § - - - 1604 | \*
- HAKE, EDWARD. *A Commemoration* of the most prosperous and peaceable raigne of our gracious and deere soveraigne lady Elizabeth. 8vo. - - 1575 |  
*A Touchstone* for the time present, &c. 12mo. 1574 | \*

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† Greepe's poem has been, through mistake, attributed by Mr. Beloe to Thomas Greene; and Ritson, by a second error, charged with its omission. — Vide *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 89.

‡ These pieces, written before 1620, were collected in his *Works*, folio, 1633, and in his "*Remains*," 1670. 8vo.

§ Vide Beloe's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 109.



- Of Gold's Kingdom* and this unhelping age, described  
in sundry poems. 4to. - 1604
- HALL, ARTHUR. "*Ten Books of Homer's Iliades.*" Trans-  
lated from the French of Hugues Salel.  
4to. † - 1581 |\*\*
- HALL, JOHN. *The Courte of Vertue*, contayning many holy  
or spretuall songes, sonnettes, psalms, balletts,  
and shorte sentences, &c. 16mo. - 1565
- HARBERT, SIR WILLIAM. *Sidney, or Baripenthes*, briefly  
shadowing out the rare and never-ending laudes  
of that most honorable and praise-worthy gent.  
Sir Philip Sidney, knight. 4to. - 1586
- HARBERT, WILLIAM. *A Prophetie of Cadwallader*, last  
King of the Britaines, &c. 4to. † - 1604 |
- HARVEY, GABRIEL. *Four Letters and Certaine Son-  
nets.* § - 1592 |\*
- HAWES, EDWARD. *Trayterous Percy's and Catesby's Proso-  
popeia.* 4to. - 1606
- HEATH, JOHN. *Two Centuries of Epigrammes.* 12mo. 1610 |
- HERBERT, MARY. *A Dialogue betweene two shepherds*, in  
praise of Astrea, by the Countesse of Pem-  
broke. || - 1602 |
- HEYWOOD, JASPER. *Various Poems and Devises.* ¶ - 1576 |

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† Warton observes, that "this translation has no other merit than that of being the first appearance of a part of the Iliad in an English dress."—Vol. iii. p. 440.

‡ Ritson appears to have confounded these two writers, Sir William, and William Harbert, and classed them as one. The latter speaks of his *unripened yeares* in 1604.—Vide British Bibliographer, No. IV. p. 300.

§ Beside these Sonnets, amounting to twenty-three, Harvey was the introducer of the miserable attempts to imitate the Latin metres, and boasts in this publication of being the first who exhibited English hexameters.

|| The celebrated sister of Sir Philip Sydney.

¶ All that are printed of these, appear in the *Paradise of Daintie Devises*, of the date annexed. He had previously translated three tragedies from Seneca, and died in 1598.

- HEYWOOD, THOMAS. *Troia Britanica* : or, Great Britaine's Troy. A Poem, devided into 17 severall Cantons, &c. † - - - - 1609
- HIGGINS, JOHN. *The First Part of the Mirour of Magistrates*, contayning the falles of the first infortunate Princes of this Lande : from the comming of Brute to the incarnation of our Saviour, &c. 4to. ‡ - - - - 1575
- HOLLAND, ROBERT. *The Holie Historie* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's nativitie, life, actes, miracles, doctrine, death, passion, resurrection and ascension : gathered into English meeter, &c. 8vo. § - - - - 1594 \*
- HOWELL, THOMAS. *The Arbor of Amitie* ; wherein is comprised pleasant poems and pretie poesies. 12mo. || - - - - 1568 \*
- Thomas Howell's Devises* for his owne exercise and his friend's pleasure. 4to. - - - - 1581
- HUBBARD, WILLIAM. *The Tragicall and Lamentable Historie* of two faythfull mates, Ceyx kynge of Thrachyne, and Alcione his Wife. - - - - 1569

† A writer known to greater advantage by his *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*, folio, 1635 ; a work of singular curiosity and much amusement.

‡ Higgins termed this the *first part*, merely in reference to the collection by Baldwin in 1559, which, commencing at a much later period, was afterwards called "the last part." Higgins's publication, in 1575, contains 17 Legends from Albanact to Irenglas ; but in 1587 he edited an edition of the *Mirroure*, including Baldwin's part, and with the addition of 24 Legends of his own composition, which carries forward his department to the death of Caracalla.

§ In the Dedication of this work, the fashionable reading of the times is thus reprobated : — "Novelties in these days delight dainty eares, and fine filed phrases to fit some fantasy's, that no book except it abound with the one or the other, or both of these, is brooked of them. Some read *Gascoyne*, some *Guevasia*, some praise the *Palace of Pleasure*, and the like, whereon they bestow whole days, yea, some whole months and years, that scarce bestow one minute on the Bible, albeit the work of God."

|| For specimens of this volume, which is supposed to be unique, see *British Bibliographer*, No. II. p. 105.



- HUDSON, THOMAS. *The Historie of Judith* in forme of a Poeme. Translated from Du Bartas. 8vo. 1584 | \*
- HUME, ALEXANDER. *Hymnes, or Sacred Songes*, wherein the right Use of Poesie may be espied. Edin. 4to. - - - - - 1599
- HUNNIS, WILLIAM. *A Hyve full of Hunnye*, contayning the firste booke of Moses called Genesis. 4to. 1578 | \*\*  
*A Handfull of Honisuckles.* - - - - - 1578 | \*  
*Seven Sobs of a Sorrowfull Soule for Sinne, &c. &c.* 24to. - - - - - 1585 | \*
- JACKSON, RICHARD. *The Battle of Floddon* in nine fits. † 1564 |
- JENEY, THOMAS. *A Discours of the present troobles in Fraunce*, and miseries of this time, compyled by Peter Ronsard, gentilman of Vandome;—translated by Thomas Jeney, gentilman. 4to. 1568
- JENYNGES, EDWARD. *The Notable Hystory of two Faithfull Lovers*, named Alfagus and Archelaus. Whearin is declared the true figure of amytye and freyndship. 4to. - - - - - 1574
- JOHNSON, RICHARD. *The Nine Worthies of London*. 4to. 1592 | \*  
*Anglorum Lachrymæ*, in a sad passion, complayning the death of our late Queene Elizabeth. 4to. 1603 | \*
- KELLY, EDMUND. *Poems on Chemistry, and on the Philosophers Stone.* ‡ - - - - - 1591 | \*\*
- KEMPE, WILLIAM. *A Dutifull Invective* against the moste haynous treasons of Ballard and Babington, &c. 4to. - - - - - 1587 | \*

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† An edition of this "famous old ballad" was published by Thomas Gent of York, about 1740, who tells us, that it was "taken from an antient manuscript, which was transcribed by Mr. Richard Guy, late schoolmaster at Ingleton, in Yorkshire." Subsequent editions have been published by Lambe and Weber.

‡ Printed in Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*.

KENDALL, TIMOTHY. "*Flowers of Epigrammes*, out of sundrie the most singular authors, as well auncient as late writers." To which, as a second part, are added

*Trifles*, by Timothie Kendal, devised and written (for the moste part) at sundrie tymes in his yong and tender age. 16mo. † - - 1577

KNELL, THOMAS. *An Epitaph* on the life and death of D. Boner, sometime unworthy Bishop of London, &c. 8vo. - - - 1569

*Answer* to the most heretical and trayterous papistical bil, cast in the streets of Northampton, &c. - - - 1570

KYFFIN, MAURICE. *The Blessednes of Brytaine*, or a celebration of the Queene's holyday, &c. 4to. 1587 \*

† Perhaps the only piece above mediocrity in Kendall's Epigrams is the following which I consider as very happily rendered:—

" MARTIAL.

*To Himselfe.*

MARTIAL, the thinges that do attaine  
The hapy life be these I finde:  
The riches left, not got with paine;  
The fruitefull ground, the quiet minde.

The egall frend; no grudge no strife;  
No charge of rule, nor governaunce;  
Without disease the healthfull life;  
The household of continuance.

The mean dyet, no delicate fare;  
True wisdom joynd with simplenes;  
The night discharged of all care,  
Where wine the wit may not oppresse.

The faithfull wife without debate;  
Such sleepes as may beguile the night;  
Content thyself with thine estate,  
Ne wishe for death, nor feare his might."

Fol. 18, b.



- LEIGHTON, SIR WILLIAM. *The Teares or Lamentations* of a  
Sorrowfull Soule. 4to. - - - - - 1613. | \*
- LEVER, CHRISTOPHER. *Queene Elizabeth's Teares*; or Her  
resolute bearing the Christian Crosse, &c. 4to.  
1607 | \*
- LINCHE, RICHARD. *The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction*.  
Wherein is lively depicted the Images and  
Statues of the Gods of the Ancients, &c. Done  
out of Italian into English. Verse and Prose.  
4to. † - - - - - 1599 \* |
- LISLE, WILLIAM. *Babilon*, a part of the seconde weeke of  
Guillaume de Saluste Seigneur du Bartas, with  
the Commentarie, and marginall notes of  
S. G. S. - - - - - 1596 | \*\*
- The Colonyes of Bartas*, with the commentarie of  
S. G. S. † - - - - - 1597 | \*\*
- LLOYD, LODOWICK. *The Pilgrimage of Queenes*. § - 1573 | \*
- Hilaria*: or the triumphant feast for the fift of  
August. - - - - - 1607 | \*
- LOK, HENRY. *The Booke of Ecclesiastes*; and Sundry

† This writer transcends mediocrity in consequence of the singular purity and harmony of his diction and versification. The subsequent lines, forming the prior part of a sonnet, have the air of being written rather in the 19th than the 16th century:—

“ Hard is his hap who never finds content,  
But still must dwell with heavy-thoughted sadnesse:  
Harder that heart that never will relent,  
That may, and will not turne these wões to gladnesse;  
Then joies adue, comfort and mirth, farewell;  
For I must now exile me from all pleasure,  
Seeking some uncouth cave where I may dwell,  
Pensive and solitarie without measure.”

‡ For an account of this author, and of a poem of his printed in 1631, see Wood's *Fasti*, vol. i. col. 147; and *Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 291.

§ A poem in Alexandrines, printed at the end of the first edition of his “*Pilgrimage of Princes*.”

- Christian Passions, containd in two hundred  
Sonnets. 4to. † - - - - - 1597 ■\*\*\*
- LOVELL, THOMAS. *A Dialogue between Custome and Veritie*,  
concerning the use and abuse of dauncing and  
minstrelsie. 8vo. - - - - - 1581
- MARBECK, JOHN. *The Holie Historie of King David*.  
4to. - - - - - 1579
- MARKHAM, GERVASE. *The Poem of Poems*, or Sion's Muse,  
contayning the divine song of king Saloman,  
devided into eight eclogues. 8vo. - 1595 ■
- The Most Honorable Tragedy* of Sir Richard Gren-  
vill knight ; a heroick poem. 8vo. - 1595 ■
- "*Devoreux*. Vertues Tears for the losse of the most  
Christian King Henry, third of that name, king  
of Fraunce ; and the untimely death of the  
most noble and heroicall gentleman, Walter  
Devoreux." From the French of Madam  
Geneuuesne Petau Maulette. 4to. - - 1597 \*■
- The Tears of the Beloved*, or the Lamentation of  
St. John, containing the death and passion of  
Christ. 4to. - - - - - 1600 ■
- Marie Magdalens Lamentations* for the losse of her  
Master Jesus. 4to. † - - - - - 1601 ■
- Ariosto's Satyres*. 4to. § - - - - - 1608

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† The 200 Sonnets are followed by 100, entitled "Sundry affectionate Sonets of a feeling conscience;" by 20, called "An Introduction to peculiar prayers," and by 59, termed "Sonnets of the Author to divers." In "The Return from Parnassus," Lok is thus, not undeservedly, sentenced to oblivion: — "Locke and Hudson, sleep you, quiet shavers, among the shavings of the press, and let your books lie in some old nook amongst old boots and shoes: so, you may avoid my censure." — *Ancient British Drama*, vol. i. p. 49.

‡ This is attributed to Markham on the authority of Mr. Haslewood. See *British Bibliographer*, No. IV. p. 381.

§ Mr. Park conceives this translation to be the production of Robert Tofte, rather than of Markham. — *Ritson's Bibliographia*, p. 274, note.



- The Famous Whore, or Noble Curtizan*, conteining the lamentable complaint of Paulina, the famous Roman curtezan, sometimes Mrs. unto the great cardinall Hypolito, of Est. 4to. 1609
- MAXWELL, JAMES. *The Laudable Life, and Deplorable Death*, of our late peerlesse Prince Henry, &c. 4to. - - - - - 1612
- MIDDLETON, CHRISTOPHER. *The Historie of Heaven*, containing the poetical fictions of all the starres in the firmament. 4to. - - - - - 1596
- The Legend of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, 4to. - - - - - 1600
- MIDDLETON, THOMAS. *The Wisdome of Solomon* paraphrased, 4to. - - - - - 1597
- MONTGOMERY, ALEXANDER. *The Cherrie and the Slae*, Edin. 4to.† - - - - - 1595 \*\*
- MUNCASTER, RICHARD. *Nænia Consolans*, or a comforting complaint. Latin and English. 4to. - 1603 \*
- MUNDAY, ANTHONY. *The Mirrour of Mutabilitie*. Selected out of the sacred Scriptures. 4to. - 1579 \*
- The Pain of Pleasure*. 4to. - - - - - 1580 \*
- The Fountayne of Fame*. 4to. - - - - - 1580 \*
- The Sweet Sobbes and Amorous Complaints* of Shep-pardes and Nymphes. - - - - - 1583 \*

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† It is to be regretted that no complete edition of the Works of Montgomery has hitherto been published. Those printed by Foulis and Urie in 1751 and 1754, are very imperfect; but might soon be rendered faithful by consulting the manuscript collection of Montgomery's Poems, presented by Drummond to the University of Edinburgh. This MS., extending to 158 pages 4to., contains, beside odes, psalms, and epitaphs, 70 sonnets, written on the Petrarchan model; and, if we may judge from the six published by Mr. Irving, exhibiting a considerable portion of poetic vigour. *The Cherrie and the Slae*, which, as the critic just mentioned observes, "has maintained its popularity for the space of two hundred years," must be pronounced in some of its parts, beautiful, and, as a whole, much above mediocrity. Sibbald has printed ten of our author's poems in the third volume of his *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*.

- Munday's Strangest Adventure* that ever happened.  
4to. - - - - - 1601 | \*
- MURRAY, DAVID. "*The Tragicall Death of Sophonisba*;"  
in seven line stanzas, to which is added *Cælia*:  
containing certaine Sonets. 12mo. † - 1611 | \*
- NEWTON, THOMAS. *Atropoion Delion*: or the Death of  
Delia, with the teares of her funerall. 4to. 1603 |
- A Pleasant New History*: or, a fragrant posie made  
of three flowers, rosa, rosalynd, and rose-  
mary. ‡ - - - - 1604 |
- NICHOLSON, SAMUEL. *Acolastus*, his after witte. 4to. 1600
- NIXON, ANTHONY. *The Christian Navy*, wherein is playnely  
described the perfect course to sayle to the  
haven of happiness. 4to. - - - - 1602
- NORDEN, JOHN. *The Storehouse of Varieties*, an elegiacall  
poeme. 4to. - - - - 1601 |
- A Pensive Soules Delight*. 4to. - - - - 1603
- The Labyrinth of Man's Life*, or Vertues Delyght,  
and Envie's Opposite. § 4to. - - - - 1614 | \*
- OVERBURY, SIR THOMAS. *A Wife*: now the Widdow of Sir  
Thomas Overburye: being a most exquisite  
and singular poem of the Choise of a Wife.  
4to. 4th edition. || - - - - 1614 | \*

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† The Sonnets of Murray appeared five years anterior to those of Drummond, and though not equal to the effusions of the bard of Hawthornden, are yet entitled to the praise of skilful construction and frequently of poetic expression. A copy is now seldom to be met with; but specimens may be found in Campbell's *History of Poetry in Scotland*, and in *Censura Literaria*, vol. x. p. 374, 375.

‡ This poet, who, in the former part of his life, practised as a physician, at Butley, in Cheshire, was a Latin poet of some eminence, and one of the translators of Seneca's *Tragedies*, published in 1581.

§ For a specimen of this poem, see Beloe's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 104.

|| Though said to be the fourth edition, this copy is supposed by Mr. Neve to be really the first impression. (See *Cursory Remarks on Ancient English Poets*, 1789, p. 27.) Few poems have been more popular than Overbury's "*Wife*;" owing partly to the good



- PARKES, WILLIAM. *The Curtaine-Drawer of the World*:  
or, the Chamberlaine of that great Inne of  
Iniquity, &c. 4to. † - 1612 \*
- PARROT, HENRY. *The Mouse Trap*. Consisting of 100  
Epigrams. 4to. - 1606
- The More the Merrier*: containing three-score and  
odde headlesse epigrams, &c. 4to. - 1608
- "*Epigrams*." Containing 160. 4to. - 1608
- Laquei Ridiculosi*: or Springes for Woodcoks. In  
2 books. 12mo. ‡ - 1613
- PARTRIDGE, JOHN. *The Most Famouse and Worthie Historie*  
of the worthy Lady Pandavola, &c. 8vo. 1566
- The Worthye Historie* of the most noble and  
valiaunt knight Plasidas, &c. 8vo. - 1566
- The Notable Historie* of two famous princes Astianax  
and Polixona. 8vo. - 1566
- PAYNE, CHRISTOPHER. *Christenmas-Carrolles* - 1569
- PEACHAM, HENRY. *Minerva Britanna*, or a Garden of He-  
roical Devises. 4to. - 1612 \*
- PEELE, GEORGE. *A Farewell*, entituled to the famous and  
fortunate generalls of our English forces: Sir  
John Norris and Syr Francis Drake, knights,

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sense with which it abounds, and partly to the interesting and tragic circumstances which accompanied the author's fate. It was speedily and frequently imitated; in 1614, appeared "*The Husband. A poeme expressed in a compleat man*," by an anonymous writer; in 1616, "*A Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overburie's Wife*," by John Davies of Hereford; in 1619, "*The Description of a Good Wife*," by Richard Brathwaite; and in the same year, "*A Happy Husband, or Directions for a Maid to chuse her Mate*," by Patrick Hannay. These pieces are inferior to their prototype, which, though not displaying much poetic inspiration, is written with elegance and perspicuity.

† This work is a composition of verse and prose. Mr. Douce terms Parkes a "writer of great ability and poetical talents, though undeservedly obscure." Vide Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 75.\*

‡ Warton, in the Fragment of his fourth volume of the History of English Poetry, remarks at p. 73, that many of Parrot's epigrams "are worthy to be revived in modern collections." The *Laquei* contain many of the epigrams which he had previously published.

- &c. Whereunto is annexed a tale of Troy.  
 4to. - - - - - 1589 | \*
- Polyhymnia* describing the honourable triumphs at  
 tylt, before her Majestie, &c. 4to. - 1590 | \*
- The Honour of the Garter*: displaid in a poeme  
 gratulatorie, &c. 4to. † - - - - 1593 | \*
- PEEND, THOMAS DE LA. *The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphro-*  
*ditus and Salmacis.* 8vo. - - - - 1565 | \*
- The Historie of John Lord Mandozze.* From the  
 Spanish. 12mo. ‡ - - - - 1565 | \*
- PERCY, WILLIAM. *Sonnets to the fairest Cælia.* 4to. - 1594 | \*\*
- PETOWE, HENRY. *The Second Part of the Loves of Hero*  
*and Leander, &c.* 4to. - - - - 1598 | \*
- Philochasander and Elanira* the faire Lady of Bri-  
 taine, &c. 4to. § - - - - 1599 | \*
- Elizabetha quasi vivans*, Elizas funerall, &c. 4to. 1603
- The Whipping of Runawaies.* - - - - 1603
- PETT, PETER. *Times Journey* to seek his Daughter Truth,  
 and Truths letter to Fame, of England's  
 excellencie. 4to. - - - - 1599
- PHILLIP, JOHN. *A Rare and Strange Historicall Novell* of  
*Cleomenes and Sophonisba*, surnamed Juliet;  
 very pleasant to reade. 8vo. - - - 1577
- A Commemoration* of the Right Noble and Vertuous  
 Ladye Margrit Duglases Good Grace, Countes  
 of Lennox, &c. ¶ - - - - 1578 | \*

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† Peele, who will afterwards be noticed as a dramatic poet, may be classed with Scoggan, Skelton, and Tarleton, as a buffoon and jester. He died before 1598, and his "Merrie conceited Jests" were published in 4to. in 1627.

‡ An ample analysis of "The Historie of Lord Mandozze," has been given in the *British Bibliographer*, No. X. p. 523.; and No. XI. p. 587. Of the poetry of this very rare version, little laudatory can be said.

§ Of this scarce poem, unknown to Ritson, the reader will find a description by Mr. Haslewood in the *British Bibliographer*, No. III. p. 214.

¶ Mr. Beloe conjectures this "Commemoration," not noticed by Ritson, to have been the production of a writer different from the *John Phillip* of the *Bibliographia* (p. 299.),



- PHISTON, WILLIAM. *A Lamentacion of Englande*, for the  
Right Reverent Father in God, John Ivele,  
Doctor of Divinitie: and Bisshop of Sarisburie.  
8vo. † - - - - 1571 | \*
- The Welspring of Wittie Conceights*, 4to. ‡ - 1584 | \*
- PLAT, HUGH. *The Floures of Philosophie*, with the Pleasures  
of Poetrie annexed to them, &c. 8vo. § - 1572 | \*
- POWELL, THOMAS. *The Passionate Poet*, with a description  
of the Thracian Ismarus, in verse. 4to. - 1601
- PRESTON, THOMAS. *A Geliflower* or swete marygolde, where-  
in the frutes of teranny you may beholde. 1569 | \*
- PRICKET, ROBERT. *A Souldier's Wish* unto his Sovereign  
Lord, King James. 4to. - - - - 1603 | \*
- PROCTOR, THOMAS. *Pretie Pamphlets*. 4to. || - - 1578 \* |
- PUTTENHAM, GEORGE. *Partheniades*. ¶ - - - 1579 | \*

and assigns for his reason, the signature, at the conclusion, namely, *John Phyllips*; but it is remarkable that the inscription, copied by Mr. Beloe, runs thus: "To all Right Noble, Honorable, Godlye and Worshipfull Ladyes, *John Phillip* wisheth," &c. a variation in the orthography which warrants an inference as to their identity. Vide Beloe, vol. ii. p. 111. et seq.

† Mr. Haslewood supposes this poem to have been written by William Phiston, of London, Student; who is considered by Herbert, p. 1012., as the same person mentioned by Warton, vol. iii. p. 308. under the appellation of W. Phist. — See Brit. Bibliogr. vol. v. p. 569.

‡ Ritson, in his *Bibliographia*, says, that no one except Warton appears to have met with this publication; extracts from it, however, may be found in the *Monthly Mirror*, vol. xiv. p. 17.

§ These Flowers are the production of one of the most celebrated agriculturists of the 16th century, the author of the "Jewell House of Art and Nature;" the "Paradise of Flora;" the "Garden of Eden," &c. &c.; but, in his poetical capacity, they prove, as Mr. Park remarks, that he "did not attain to 'a plat of rising ground in the territory of Parnassus.'" — *Censura Lit.* vol. viii. p. 7.

|| These are printed in the latter part of the miscellany, entitled "A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions."

¶ Beside these verses in honour of Elizabeth, Puttenham wrote the "Isle of Great Britain," a little brief romance; "Elpine," an eclogue; "Minerva," an hymn; and, throughout his "Arte of Poesie," are interspersed a number of *verses, epigrams, epitaphs, translations, imitations*, &c. Mr. Haslewood has prefixed a copy of the *Partheniades* to his reprint of "The Arte of English Poesie," 1811.

- RAMSEY, LAURENCE. *Ramsie's Farewell* to his late lord and master therle of Leicester. 1588
- RANKINS, WILLIAM. *Seven Satyres, &c.* - 1596
- RAYNOLDS, JOHN. *Dolarny's Primerose*; or the first part of the Passionate Hermit, &c. Written by a Practitioner in Poesie and a stranger amongst Poets. 4to. † - 1606 \*|
- RICE, RICHARD. *An Invective* against vices taken for vertue: gathered out of the Scriptures, &c. 8vo. 1581
- ROBINSON, RICHARD. *The Rewarde of Wickednesse*, discoursing the sundrye monstrous abuses of wicked and ungodly Worldeings, &c. 4to. 1574 \*\*|
- A Dyall of Dayly Contemplacion*, or divine Exercise of the Mind, &c. Verse and Prose. ‡ - 1578 \*\*|
- ROLLAND, JOHN. *Ane Treatise callit the Court of Venus*, devidit into four Buikes. Edin. 4to. - 1575
- The Sevin Seages*, translatit out of Prois into Scottis meiter. Edin. 4to. § - 1578 |
- ROSSE, J. *The Author's Teares* upon the death of his honorable freende Sir William Sackville knight of the ordre de la Colade in Fraunce: sonne

† For specimens of this poem, the British Bibliographer, No. II. p. 153., may be consulted. Why it was called Dolarny's Primerose does not appear. Reynolds possesses some merit as a descriptive poet.

‡ Of this work, not mentioned by Ritson, an account has been given by Mr. Haslewood in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iv. p. 241. The "Rewarde of Wickednesse" is written on the plan of the "Mirror for Magistrates," and was composed during the author's night-watches as one of the sentinels employed to guard the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. Robinson is supposed to be author of "The ruffull tragedy of Hemidos and Thelay," licensed in 1570.

§ To Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 287., and to *Restituta*, No. III. p. 177., I refer the reader for the only account which I can recollect of this obscure writer. Irving and Pinkerton merely mention the titles of his poems. Mr. Gillies, in a very interesting article in the *Restituta*, has given us an ample specimen of his "Seven Sages."



- to the right ho. the lorde Buckhurst Anno  
Dni. † - - - - - 1592 \*
- ROUS, FRANCIS. *Thule, or Vertues Historie*. In two books.  
The first booke 4to. - - - - - 1598
- ROWLAND, SAMUEL. 1. *The Betraying of Christ, &c.* 4to.  
1598
2. *The Famous History of Guy Earle of Warwicke.*  
4to. - - - - -
3. *The Letting of Humours Blood in the head-  
vaine: &c.* 4to. ‡ - - - - 1600
4. *Looke to it for ile stabbe ye.* 4to. - - - - 1604
5. *Democritus.* - - - - - 1607
6. *Humors Looking-Glasse.* 8vo. - - - - 1608
7. *Hell Broke Loose, &c.* 4to. - - - -
8. *Doctor Merrieman, or nothing but mirth.* 4to.  
1609
9. *Martin Markal, beadle of Bridewell.* 4to. - 1610
10. *The Knave of Clubs, or 'tis merrie when Knaves  
meet.* 4to. - - - - - 1611
11. *The Knave of Hearts.* 4to. § - - - -
12. *More Knaves Yet; the Knaves of Spades and  
Diamonds.* 4to. || - - - - 1613
13. *The Melancholie Knight.* 4to. ¶ - - - 1615

† Ritson says, that this is "a poem in 168 six-line stanzas, of considerable merit, and with great defects: a 4to. MS. in the possession of Francis Douce, Esq."—Vide Bibliographia Poetica, p. 315.

‡ Several extracts from this work, consisting of seven satires, have been given by Warton in his Fragment of Vol. IV. See also Censura Literaria, vol. vi. p. 277.; and Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 125., where further notices of this medley may be found. It went through subsequent editions in 1607 and 1611.

§ This poem and the three succeeding are not recorded by Ritson. See Censura Lit. vol. ii. p. 150., in an article by Mr. Gilchrist.

|| For a description of this copy see Brit. Bibliogr., No. V. p. 548.

¶ Curious specimens from this publication have been given by Mr. Haslewood in the Brit. Bibliographer, No. X. p. 549.

14. *Tis Merrie when Gossips Meet*; newly enlarged,  
with divers songs. 4to. † - - - - \*
- SABIE, FRANCIS. *Pan his Pipe*: conteyning three pastorall  
Eglogues in Englyshe hexameter; with other  
delightfull verses. 4to. - - - - 1595 \*
- The Fissher-mans Tale*: of the famous Actes, Life  
and love of Cassander a Grecian Knight. 4to.  
1595 |
- Flora's Fortune*. The second part and finishing of  
the Fisherman's Tale, &c. ‡ - - - 1595 |
- SAKER, AUG. *The Labirinth of Liberty*. - - - 1579
- SAMPSON, THOMAS. *Fortune's Fashion*, Pourtrayed in the  
troubles of the Ladie Elizabeth Gray, wife to  
Edward the Fourth. 4to. - - - 1613 | \*
- SANDFORD, JAMES. *Certayne Poems* dedicated to the queenes  
moste excellent majestie. 8vo. § - - - 1576
- SCOLOKER, ANTHONY. *Daiphantus*, or the Passions of Love,  
4to. - - - - 1604
- SCOT, GREGORY. *A Brieve Treatise* agaynst certaine errors  
of the Romish Church. 12mo. - - - 1570
- SCOTT, THOMAS. *Four Paradoxes*: of Arte, of Lawe, of  
Warre, of Service. Small 8vo. || - - - 1602 \*\* |

† Of this voluminous pamphleteer, five more pieces are enumerated by Ritson, published posterior to 1616. Though a rapid and careless writer, he occasionally exhibits considerable vigour, and has often satirized with spirit the manners and follies of his period. He may be justly classed as surmounting mediocrity, and he is therefore designated as such at the close of this article.

‡ This poem, and the Fisherman's Tale, are written in blank verse, a species of composition in which Sabie had been preceded by Surrey, Gascoigne, Turberville, Riche, Peele, Higgins, Blenerhasset, Aske, Vallans, Greene, Breton, Chapman, Marlowe, &c. A copious analysis of these pieces has been given by Mr. Haslewood in No. V. of the *British Bibliographer*, from p. 488. to 503.; but neither the genius nor the versification of Sabie merit much notice: his *Pan*, however, contains some beautiful rhymed lines.

§ Annexed, says Ritson, to his "Hours of Recreation or after dinners," 1576, 8vo.

|| The "Four Paradoxes" occupy four portions, each consisting of 18 six-line stanzas, and the whole is terminated by three additional ones, entitled his "Resolution." The



- SCOTT, THOMAS. *Phylomythie, or Philomythologie*: wherein  
Outlandish Birds, Beasts, and Fishes, are  
taught to speake true English plainly. † 1616 | \*
- SMITH, JUD. *A Misticall Devise* of the spirituall and godly  
love between Christ the spouse, and the Church  
or congregation. Firste made by the wise  
prince Salomon, and now newly set forth in  
Verse, &c. Small 8vo - - - 1575 | \*\*
- SMITH, WILLIAM. *Chloris*, or the complaint of the pas-  
sionate despised shepheard. 4to. - - - 1596
- SOOTHERN, JOHN. *Pandora*, the Musique of the Beautie of  
his Mistresse Diana. 4to. ‡ - - - 1584 | \*\*\*\*\*
- STANYHURST, RICHARD. *The First Four Bookes of Virgil's*  
*Æneis*, translated into English heroicall verse  
by Richard Stanyhurst: with other poeticall  
devises thereto annexed. 4to. § - - - 1583 | \*\*\*\*\*

specimens of this poem adduced by Mr. Park in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iii. and iv., speak highly in its favour, and seem to justify the following encomium: — “There is much manly observation, forcible truth, apt simile, and moral pith in the poem itself; and it leaves a lingering desire upon the mind, to obtain some knowledge of a writer, whose meritorious production was unheralded by any contemporary verse-man, and whose name remains unrecorded by any poetical biographer.”—Vol. iii. p. 376.

† An accurate account of this volume, which was republished in 1622 and 1640, may be found in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iii. p. 381. “From the great disparity of merit between this and the preceding article,” observes Mr. Park, “there is little reason to suppose them by the same author, though they bear the same name.”

‡ A perfect copy of this miserable collection of poems, consisting of sonnets, elegies, odes, odellets, &c. was purchased, at a sale, by Mr. Triphook for twelve guineas. The only copy before known was without a title, from which Ritson has given a full account, though, at the same time, he terms the author an “arrogant and absurd coxcomb,” and condemns him for his “wretched style, profligate plagiarism, ridiculous pedantry, and unnatural conceit.”—Vide *Bib. Poetica*, p. 337. et seq.

§ An ample and interesting description of Stanyhurst, and his translation, will be found in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iv. pp. 225. 354., the production of Mr. Haslewood. Nash has not exaggerated when, alluding to this poet, he says, “whose heroical poetry infired, I should say inspired, with an hexameter furye, recalled to life whatever hissed barbarism hath been buried this hundred yeare; and revived by his ragged quill such carterly varietie, as no hedge plowman in a countrie but would have held as the extremitie of

- STORER, THOMAS. *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey*,  
cardinall, divided into three parts: his aspiring,  
triumph, and death. 4to. † - - - 1599 \* |
- STUBBS, PHILIP. *A View of Vanitie*, and Allarum to Eng-  
land, or retrait from sinne. 8vo. - - - 1582 | \*
- STEWART, JAMES THE FIRST, KING OF ENGLAND. *The Essayes*  
*of a Prentise* in the Divine Art of Poesie. 4to.  
Edin. ‡ - - - - 1584 | \*
- His Majesties Poeticall Exercises* at Vacant Houres.  
4to. Edin. § - - - - 1591 | \*
- TARLTON, RICHARD. *Toyes*: in Verse. - - - 1576
- Tragicall Treatises*, conteyninge sundrie discourses  
and pretie conceipts, bothe in prose and verse.  
1577
- Tarlton's Repentance*, or his farewell to his frendes  
in his siekness, a little before his deathe. || 1589

clownerie: a patterne whereof I will propound to your judgment, as near as I can, being part of one of his descriptions of a tempest, which is thus: —

“ Then did he make heaven's vault to rebound  
With rounce robble bobble,  
Of ruffe raffe roaring,  
With thicke thwacke thurly bouncing.”

Nash's Preface to Greene's *Arcadia*.

† Storer's *Life of Wolsey*, which is about to be reprinted, has a claim upon our attention, both for its matter and manner: he was a contributor also to “*England's Helicon*,” and has been highly extolled by his friend Fitzgeffrey, in *Affanis*, lib. i.

‡ The most interesting part of this volume, from the nature of its subject, is “*Ane schort Treatise* containing some Reulis and Cautelis to be observit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie,” in which the regal critic observes, that “*sindrie hes written of it in English*,” an assertion which would lead to the supposition that some of our earliest critics had perished; for Gascoigne's “*Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme*,” 1575, appears now to be the only piece of criticism on poetic composition which preceded James's “*Essayes*.”

§ The *Poetical Exercises* contain but two poems, — the “*Furies*,” translated from Du Bartas, and “*The Lepanto*,” an original piece. Several minor poems, introduced into his own works and those of others, some sonnets and a translation of the psalms, were written by James after his accession to the English throne.

|| Of this far-famed comedian and jester, Fuller says, that “*when Queen Elizabeth was serious (I dare not say sullen) and out of good humour, he could undumpish her at his*



- TAYLOR, JOHN. *Heaven's Blessing and Earth's Joy, &c.* on the marriage of Frederick Count Palatine, and the Princess Elizabeth; including Epithalamia, &c. - - - - - 1613 **||\*\***
- The Nipping or Snipping of Abuses*, or the Wool-gathering of Wit. † - - - - - 1614 **||\*\***
- TOFTE, ROBERTE. *Two Tales* translated out of Ariosto, &c. With certaine other Italian stanzas and proverbes. 4to. - - - - - 1597 **||\***
- Laura*. The toyes of a traveller; or the feast of fancie, divided into 3 parts. 4to. - - - - - 1597
- Orlando Inamorato*. The three first bookes, &c. Done into English heroicall verse. 4to. - 1598
- Alba*, the month's minde of a melancholy lover. 8vo. 1598
- Honours Academy*, or the famous pastorall of the faire shepherdesse Julietta. Verse and prose. Folio. - - - - - 1610 **||**
- The Fruits of Jealousie*. Contayning the disastrous Chance of two English Lovers, overthrowne through meere Conceit of Jealousie. 4to. ‡ 1615 **||\*\***

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pleasure. Her highest favourites would in some cases go to Tarlton before they would go to the Queen, and he was their usher to prepare their advantageous accession to her. In a word, he told the Queen more of her faults than most of her chaplains, and cured her melancholy better than all her physicians." Indeed, in the language of a contemporary,

" Of all the jesters in the lande  
He bare the praise awaie."

Vide Ritson Bibl. p. 359.

† Of this voluminous scribbler, whose rhyming spirit, remarks Granger, did not evaporate with his youth, who held the pen much longer than he did the oar, and who was the poetaster of half a century, I have only been able to insert two of his earliest productions, the remainder being subsequent to 1616, and extending to 1653. He was thirty-two when Shakspeare died; and "the waterman," observes Mr. Chalmers, "must have often sculled Shakspeare, who is said to have lived on *The Bankside*."—Apology, p. 101.

‡ *The Fruites of Jealousie*, a long poem in octave measure, may be found at the close of *The Blazon of Jealousie*, translated from the Italian of Varchi, of which an account is given in *Censura Literaria*, vol. iv. p. 403.

- TREEGO, WILLIAM. *A Daintie Nosegay* of divers smelles,  
containing many pretie ditties to diverse effects. 1577
- TUDOR, ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND. *Two Little Anthems*, or things in meeter of hir majestie. † 1578 | \*
- TURNER, RICHARD. *Nosce Te (Humors.)* ‡ - - 1607
- TWYNE, THOMAS. *The whole xij Bookes of the Æneidos of Virgill*. Whereof the first ix. and part of the tenth, were converted into English meeter by Thomas Phaër esquier, and the residue supplied, and the whole worke together newly set forth, by Thomas Twyne gentleman. 4to. 1573 | \*
- TYE, CHRISTOPHER. *A Notable Historye* of Nastagio and Traversari, no less pitiefull than pleasaunt, translated out of Italian into English. 12mo. 1569
- UNDERDOWNE, THOMAS. *Ovid his Invective* against Ibis. 8vo. - - - - - 1569 \* |
- The Excellent Historye* of Theseus and Ariadne, &c. Written in English Meeter. 8vo. - 1566 \* |

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† Beside these anthems, which were licensed to her printer, Christ. Barker, Nov. 15., her Majesty wrote a variety of small pieces, some of which have been preserved by Hentzner, Puttenham, and Soothern, and reprinted by Percy, Ellis, and Ritson. The fourteenth Psalm also, and the Speech of the Chorus in the second Act of the Hercules Cætareus of Seneca, have been published by Mr. Park, the latter poem being a specimen of blank verse. —Vide Park's *Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. i. p. 102.

Of the execrable flattery which was systematically bestowed on this monarch, the following eulogium upon her poetry, is a curious instance. After enumerating the best poets of his age, Puttenham thus proceeds:—"But last in recitall and first in degree is the Queene our soveraigne Lady, whose learned, delicate, noble Muse, easily surmounteth all the rest that have written before her time or since, for sence, sweetnesse and subtiltie, be it Ode, Elegie, Epigram, or any other kinde of poeme, Heroick, Lyricke, wherein it shall please her Majestie to employ her penne, even by as much oddes as her owne excellent estate and degree exceedeth all the rest of her most humble vassalls."—*The Arte of English Poesie*, reprint, p. 51.

‡ A Collection of Epigrams.



- VALLANS, WILLIAM. *A Tale of Two Swannes, &c.* 4to. 1590
- VENNARD, RICHARD. "*The Miracle of Nature,*" and other poems. 4to. † - - - - 1601
- VERSTEGAN, RICHARD. *Odes*: in imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalms. With sundry other poemes and Ditties, tending to devotion and pietie. 8vo. - - - - 1601 | \*
- WARREN, WILLIAM. *A Pleasant New Fancie*, of a fondling's device, intituled and cald, The nurserie of names, &c. 4to. - - - - 1581
- WEBBE, WILLIAM. *The First and Second Eclogues of Virgil.* In English hexameters, and printed in his "*Discourse of English Poetrie.*" - 1586 | \*
- WEBSTER, WILLIAM. *The Moste Pleasant and Delightful Historie of Curan*, a prince of Danske, and the fayre princesse Argentill, &c. 4to. † - - - - | \*
- WEDDERBURN. *Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs*, collectit out of sundrie partes of the Scripture, with sundrie of other Ballates changed out of Prophane Sanges, for avoyding of Sinne and Harlotrie. 12mo. Edin. § - 1597 | \*
- WEEVER, JOHN. *A Little Book of Epigrams.* 8vo. - 1599
- The Mirror of Martyrs*, or the life and death of that thrice valiant capitaine and most godly martyre, Sir John Oldcastle knight, lord Cobham. 18mo. - - - - 1601

† These poems were published in a tract entitled "*The Right Way to Heaven, and the true testimony of a faithfull and loyall subject,*" 1601.

‡ This copy is without date, but a second edition was printed in 1617; it is a miserable paraphrase of Warner's exquisite episode.

§ Of this Collection Lord Hailes published a specimen in 1765; in 1801, Mr. J. Gr. Dalzell reprinted the whole, with the Scottish poems of the 16th century. Edin. 2 vols. 12mo.; and Mr. Irving has given some notices of the author in his *Scottish poets*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1804.

- WENMAN, THOMAS. *The Legend of Mary, Queen of Scots*, with other Poems. † - - - - 1601 |
- WHARTON, JOHN. *Wharton's Dreame*: conteyninge an invective agaynst certaine abhominable caterpillars, &c. 4to. - - - - 1578
- WHETSTONE, GEORGE. *The Rocke of Regard*: divided into foure parts. The first, the Castle of Delight, &c. The second, the Garden of Unthriftnesse, &c. The thirde, the Arbour of Virtue, &c.; and the fourth, the Orchard of Repentance, 4to. † - - - - 1576 | \*
- A Report of the Vertues of the right valiant and worthy knight S. Frauncis, Lord Russell*, 4to. § - - - - 1585 | \*
- WHITNEY, GEOFFREY. *A Choice of Emblemes*, and other devises. 4to. - - - - 1586 | \*
- Fables or Epigrams*. 4to. || - - - - 1586
- WILKINSON, EDWARD. *Isahac's Inheritance*; dew to ovr high and mightie Prince, James the sixt of Scotland, &c. 4to. - - - - 1603 | \*
- WILLET, ANDREW. *Sacrorum Emblematum centura una*, in Latin and English verse. 4to. ¶ - - - -
- WILLYMAT, WILLIAM. *A Princes Looking Glasse*, or a Princes Direction, &c. 4to. - - - - 1603 | \*

† Wenman's *Legend and Poems* have lately been printed by Mr. Fry, in an octavo volume, from a quarto manuscript of 52 leaves. The *Legend* appears to have been intended for insertion in the *Mirror for Magistrates*.

‡ For a very full account of "The Rocke of Regard," by Mr. Park, see *Censura Lit.* vol. v. p. 1.

§ This poem of 90 seven-line stanzas, is annexed to Bindley's "Mirror of True Honour and Christian Nobility," &c. 1585. 4to.

|| Of Whitney's *Emblemes*, which, being printed at Leyden, is a very rare book, a description will be found in *Censura Lit.* vol. v. p. 233.

¶ Willet's *Emblems* were written before 1598, as Meres alludes to them in his "Paladis Tamia."



- WYRLEY, WILLIAM. *Lord Chandos*. The glorious life and honourable death of Sir John Chandos, &c. 4to. - - - - - 1592 | \*\*
- Capitall de Buz*. The honourable life and languishing death of Sir John de Gralhy Capitall de Buz. 4to. † - - - - - 1592 | \*\*
- YATES, JAMES. *The Castell of Courtesie*, whereunto is adjoynd The Holde of Humilitie; with the Chariot of Chastitie thereunto annexed. Also a Dialogue betweene Age and Youth; and other matters herein conteined. 4to. † - 1582 | \*
- YONG, BARTHOLOMEW. *Diana of George of Montemayer*. Translated out of Spanish into English. Prose and Verse. Folio. § - - - - - 1598 \* |
- ZOUCHE, RICHARD. *The Dove, or Passages of Cosmography*, by Richard Zouche, Civilian of New College, in Oxford. || - - - - - 1618 |

Several articles in this table, it will be observed, are without any mark designating their merit in the scale, a defalcation which has occurred from our not having been able to procure either the works themselves, or even specimens of them, a circumstance not exciting wonder, if we consider the extreme rarity of the greater part of the pieces which form the catalogue.

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† These biographical poems were added to the author's "True use of Armorie," 1592, 4to. Of the first poem an extract is given in *Censura Lit.* vol. i. p. 149, 150.

‡ A copy of these poems, apparently unique, is in the possession of Mr. Park, who has communicated a description of it in *Censura Lit.* vol. iii. p. 175.

§ This romance, which abounds with poetry, is of the pastoral species; it is written on the plan of Sidney's *Arcadia*, and, like it, exhibits many beautiful passages both in prose and verse: twenty-seven of its poetical effusions have been inserted in "England's Helicon," and several have been lately reprinted in "Restituta," No. VII. accompanied by some interesting remarks from the pen of Sir Egerton Brydges.

|| For a specimen of this poem, which "is a concise geographical description of three-quarters of the world, Asia, Africa, and Europe, in the manner of Dionysius," and which Mr. Beloe believes to be unique, see his *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 74.

Another result which may immediately strike the reader will be, that of *one hundred and ninety-three* poets included in this list, so few should have risen even one degree above mediocrity, and so many should have fallen below it; but it should be recollected that the nobler bards, amounting to *forty*, had been previously enumerated, and that poetic excellence is, at all times, of very rare attainment.

The most legitimate subject of admiration, indeed, arising from a review of these details, is the extraordinary fecundity of the Shakspearean era; that in the course of fifty-two years, and independent of any consideration of dramatic effort, or of the various contributors to collections of poetry, nearly *two hundred and thirty-three* bards in the miscellaneous department should have been produced: and these, not the writers of scattered or insulated verses, but the publishers of their own collected works.

A still more heightened conception of the fertility of the period will accrue from a survey of its numerous POETICAL MISCELLANIES, a species of publication which constitutes a remarkable feature of the age.

Before the reign of Elizabeth, only one production of the kind had made its appearance, namely, the Collection, called by Tottel "The Poems of Ucertaine Auctors," and appended to his edition of Surrey and Wyat in 1557. But, during the first year after the accession of our maiden queen, appeared the MIRROR for MAGISTRATES, a quarto volume containing nineteen legends or characters drawn from English history. The plan originated with Sackville, who, not finding leisure to write more than an Induction and the Legend of Henry Duke of Buckingham, transferred the completion of the work to *Richard Baldwyne* and *George Ferrers*, who were further assisted in its prosecution by *Churchyard*, *Phayer*, *Skelton*, *Dolman*, *Seagers*, and *Cavyl*. A second edition, of what may be termed Baldwyne's Mirror, was printed in 1563, with the addition of eight legends; a third issued from the press in 1571, and a fourth in 1575. With the exception of Sackville's two pieces, on which an eulogium has already been given,



mediocrity may be said to characterise the productions of Baldwyne and his associates.

In the same year which produced the fourth edition of Baldwyne's Collection, a new series of Legends was published in 4to. by *John Higgins*, which, commencing at an earlier period than his predecessor's work, he entitled "The firste Part of the Mirour for Magistrates." This portion commences, after an Induction, with the legend of King Albanact, the youngest son of Brutus, and terminates with that of Lord Irenglas, "slyne about the yeere before Christ;" including seventeen histories, the sole composition of Higgins. It was reprinted, with little or no alteration, in 1578, and occasioned Baldwyne's prior publication to be called "The Last Part."

The year 1578, however, not only produced this second impression of Higgins's Mirrour, but witnessed a fifth and separate edition of Baldwyne's labours, with the addition of two legends, and an intermediate part written by *Thomas Blener-Hasset*, containing twelve stories, and entitled "The Seconde part of the Mirrour of Magistrates, containing the falles of the infortunate Princes of this Lande: from the Conquest of Cæsar unto the commyng of Duke William the Conquerer," 4to.

A much more complete edition of this very curious collection of poetic biography at length appeared in 1587, under the care of Higgins, who, blending Baldwyne's pieces with his own former publications, and adding greatly to both parts, produced a quarto volume consisting of seventy-three legends.

Enlarged and improved as this impression must necessarily be deemed, it was still further augmented, and, in fact, digested anew by Richard Niccols, who, in 1610, published his copy of the work with the following title: "*A Mirrour for Magistrates*, being a true Chronicle-history of the untimely falles of such unfortunate princes and men of note as have happened since the first entrance of Brute into this Iland untill this our age. Newly enlarged with a last part called a *Winter Night's Vision*, being an addition of such Tragedies especially famous

as are exempted, in the former Historie, with a poem annexed called *England's Eliza*."

Niccols's edition forms a thick quarto of eight hundred and seventy-five pages, including ninety legends, and embracing, with the exception of four pieces, all the parts previously published, in chronological order, and super-adding an induction and ten poems of his own composition. He has taken the liberty, however, of modernising and abbreviating some of the earliest stories, with the view of rendering the series more acceptable to his contemporaries.

Of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, the poetical merit must, of course, be various and discrepant. Sackville stands pre-eminent and apart, the author, indeed, of a poem, which, for strength and distinctness of imagery, is almost unrivalled. Next, but with many a length between, Niccols claims our attention for sweetness of versification, perspicuity of diction, and occasional flights of fancy. In his legend of Richard the Third, he is evidently indebted to Shakspeare, and his poem assumes, on that account, a higher imaginative tone. The other writers of this bulky collection are as much inferior to Niccols, as he is to Sackville. The best production of Higgins is his legend of Queen Cordelia; and from Baldwyne and Ferrers, a few stanzas, animated by the breath of poetry, might be quoted; but Blener-Hasset seldom, if ever, reaches mediocrity.

The popularity of this work, and its influence on our national poetry, throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, were very considerable. Even in its earliest and most unfinished state it had attracted the admiration of Sir Philip Sidney, who says, "I account the Mirrour of Magistrates, meetely furnished of beautiful partes \*;" and in its last and most perfect form, it seems to have been considered as a book necessary to the accomplished gentleman; for in Chapman's Comedy, entitled *May-Day*, and printed in 1611, a character versed in the elegant literature of the time, is described as "One that

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\* Sidney's Works, 7th edit., fol., 1629, p. 561.



has read Marcus Aurelius, *Gesta Romanorum*, and the *Mirroure of Magistrates*.” \*

That this Collection contributed to accelerate the progress of dramatic poetry, and to familiarise the events of our history, there can be little doubt, if we reflect that, previous to its appearance, historical plays were scarcely known ; that its pages present us with innumerable specimens of dramatic speeches, incidents, and characters, and that it has thrown into a metrical form the most interesting passages of the ancient chroniclers, a medium through which the best parts of those massive compilations soon descended to the lower orders of society.

The next work which calls for our attention is *THE PARADYSE OF DAYNTY DEVICES*, originally published in 1576 with the following title:—“The Paradyse of daynty devises, aptly furnished with sundry pithie and learned inventions : devised and written for the most part by M. Edwards, sometimes of her Majesties Chappel: the rest by sundry learned Gentlemen, both of honor, and worshippe: viz.

S. Barnarde. Jasper Heywood.

E. O. F. K.

L. Vaux. M. Bewe.

D. S. R. Hill.

M. Yloop, with others.

Imprinted at London, by Henry Disle, dwellyng in Paules Church-yard, at the South west doore of Saint Paules Church, and are there to be solde,” 4to.

Though, until the late re-print by Sir Egerton Brydges, this miscellany had become extremely rare†, yet numerous editions of it were called for during the first thirty years of its existence. In 1577, and 1578, Disle again published it in quarto, and it is remarkable for being the only book of his printing which has reached the present

\* May-Day; a wittie comedie. Divers times acted at “The Blacke Fryers;” 4to. Act iii. fol. 39.

† A copy of this Miscellany, of the edition of 1580, sold at the Roxburghe Sale, for 55*l.* 13*s.*!

age. The edition of 1578 differs, in some respects, from the preceding, and from all, in including a poem by George Whetstone, no where else discoverable.

A fourth edition, from the press of Disle, appeared in 1580, varying so greatly from the earlier copies, that it omits eighteen poems contained in the first impression, and substitutes eighteen others in their place.

In 1585, the public attention was fixed on a fifth edition by Edward White, who also republished the work in 1596 and 1600 in 4to. The two latter impressions were printed by Edward Allde for White, and exhibit some variations from the copy of 1580, omitting four pieces in that edition, and adding seven new ones. Beside these, there was an edition, without date, printed by Allde for White, and constituting an *eighth* impression.

That a Collection which ran through so many editions in so short a period, must possess a considerable share of merit, will be a natural inference; nor will the readers of the Reprint lately published be disappointed in such an expectation. It is true that the *Paradise of Daintie Devises* contains no piece of such high poetic character as the *Induction* of Sackville; for its contributions are chiefly on subjects of an ethic and didactic cast; but it displays a vast variety of short compositions, on love, friendship, and adversity; on the consolations of a contented mind, on the instability of human pleasures, and on many of the minor morals and events of life. These are expressed, in many instances, with simplicity and vigour, and often with a flow of versification and perspicuity of diction, which, considering the age of their production, is truly remarkable. If no splendour of imagery, or sublimity of sentiment, arrest the attention, it cannot be denied that several of these poems make their way to the heart, by attractions resulting from a clear perception, that the writers wrote from their own unadulterated feelings, from the instant pressure of what they suffered or enjoyed.

Of the contributors to this Miscellany, which, in its most perfect state, consists of one hundred and twenty-four poems, more than one



half was communicated by six individuals ; by Lord Vaux fourteen pieces ; by Richard Edwardes fourteen ; by William Hunnis twelve ; by Francis Kinwelmarsh ten ; by Jasper Heywood eight ; and by the Earl of Oxford seven.

The compositions of Lord Vaux are uniformly of a moral and pensive cast, and breathe a spirit of religion and resignation often truly touching, and sometimes bordering on the sublime. Of this description more particularly are the poems entitled "Of the instabilitie of youth ;" "Of a contented mind ;" and on "Beyng asked the occasion of his white head," from the last of which a few lines will afford a pleasing specimen of the pathetic tone and unaffected style of this noble bard :—

" These heeres of age are messingers,  
Whiche bidd me fast, repent and praie :  
Thei be of death the harbingers,  
That doeth prepare and dresse the waie,  
Wherefore I joye that you mai see,  
Upon my head such heeres to bee.

Thei be the line that lead the length,  
How farre my race was for to ronne :  
Thei saie my yongth is fledde with strength,  
And how old age is well begonne.  
The whiche I feele, and you maie see,  
Upon my head such lines to bee." \*

Of a character still higher for poetic power are the effusions of Richard Edwards, who excels alike in descriptive, ethic, and pathetic strains. Of the first, his two pieces called "May" and "I may not" are, with the exception of the third stanza of the latter poem, very striking instances ; of the second, he has afforded us several proofs ; and of the last, his lines on the maxim of Terence, *Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio est*, form one of the most lovely exemplifications

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\* Reprint by Sir Egerton Brydges, 1810. p. 44.

in the language. Of the opening stanza it is scarcely possible to resist giving a transcription : —

“ In going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,  
I heard a wife syng to her child, that long before had wept :  
She sighed sore and sang full sore, to bryng the babe to rest,  
That would not rest but cried still in suckyng at her brest :  
She was full wearie of her watche, and grieved with her child,  
She rocked it and rated it, untill on her it smilde :  
Then did she saie nowe have I founde the proverbe true to prove,  
The fallyng out of faithfull frends renewing is of love.” \*

“ The happiness of the illustration,” remarks Sir Egerton Brydges, “ the facility, elegance, and tenderness of the language, and the exquisite turn of the whole, are above commendation ; and show to what occasional polish and refinement our literature even then had arrived. Yet has the treasure which this gem adorned, lain buried and inaccessible, except to a few curious collectors, for at least a century and an half.” †

Edwards has a song of four stanzas “ In commendation of Musick,” ‡ of which the first has been quoted by Shakspeare in *Romeo and Juliet* §, affording a proof, if any were wanted, that the madrigals of Edwards were very popular in their day.

Of the poetry of *William Hunnis* the more remarkable features are a peculiar flow of versification, and a delicate turn upon the words, which approximate his songs, in an extraordinary degree, to the standard of the present age. By dividing his lines of sixteen syllables into two, this similarity becomes more apparent ; for instance,—

“ When first mine eyes did view and mark  
Thy beauty fair for to behold,  
And when mine eares gan first to hark  
The pleasant words that thou me told ;  
I would as then I had been free  
From ears to hear and eyes to see.

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\* Reprint, p. 42.

† Preface to his reprint, p. vi.

‡ Reprint, p. 55.

§ Reed's Shakspeare, vol. xx. p. 222. Act iv. sc. 5.



And when in mind I did consent  
 To follow thus my fancy's will,  
 And when my heart did first relent  
 To taste such bait myself to spill,  
 I would my heart had been as thine,  
 Or else thy heart as soft as mine. \*

O flatterer false, thou traitor born,  
 What mischief more might thou devise,  
 Than thy dear friend to have in scorn,  
 And him to wound in sundry wise?  
 Which still a friend pretends to be,  
 And art not so by proof I see.  
 Fie, fie, upon such treachery." †

From the ten contributions by Kinwelmarsh, three may be selected as pleasing, both from their sentiment and melody, viz. "On learning;" "All things are vain," which is a truly beautiful poem; and "The complaint of a Sinner." ‡ Neither the productions of Heywood, nor of the Earl of Oxford, surmount mediocrity.

Of the remaining writers who assisted in forming this collection, *M. Bew* has written five pieces; *Arthur Bourcher*, one; *M. Candish*, one; *Thos. Churchyard*, one; *G. Gashe*, one; *Richard Hill*, seven; *Lodowick Lloyd*, one; *T. Marshall*, two; *Barnaby Rich*, one; *D. Sands*, five; *M. Thorn*, two; *Yloop*, two, and there are five with the signature of *My lucke is losse*. There are sixteen poems also with initials only subjoined, and seven anonymous contributions. Most of these consist of moral precepts versified, and, though little entitled to the appellation of poetry, from any display either of imagery or invention, are yet of high value as developing the progress both of literary and intellectual cultivation.

The popularity of Edwards's Miscellany produced, two years afterward, another collection of a similar kind, under the title of "A GORGIOUS GALLERY OF GALLANT INVENTIONS. Garnished and decked with Divers Dayntie Devises, right delicate and delightfull, to recreate

\* Reprint, p. 57, 58.

† Ibid. p. 65.

‡ Ibid. p. 14. 37. 87.

eche modest minde withall. First framed and fashioned in sundrie formes, by Divers Worthy Workemen of late dayes: and now joyned together and builded up: By T. P. Imprinted at London, for Richard Jones. 1578."

Of this work, "one copy only," relates Mr. Park, "is known to have survived the depredation of time. This was purchased by Dr. Farmer, with the choice poetical stores of Mr. Wynne, which had been formed in the seventeenth century by Mr. Narcissus Luttrell. At Dr. Farmer's book-sale this *unique* was procured by Mr. Malone; from whose communicative kindness a transcript was obtained, which furnished the present reprint. One hiatus, occasioned by the loss of a leaf, occurs at p. 102, which it will be hopeless to supply, unless some chance copy should be lurking in the corner of a musty chest, a family-library, or neglected lumber-closet; though, in consequence of the estimation in which all antiquated rarities are now held, even such hiding-places have become very assiduously explored." \*

By the Initials T. P. we are to understand *Thomas Proctor*, the editor of this "Gorgious Gallery," and who has been noticed in the preceding table on account of his "Pretie Pamphlets," which commence at p. 125 of Mr. Park's Reprint. His verses following this title are numerous, and in various metres, and indicate him to have been no mean observer of life and manners. If he display little of the fancy of the poet, he is not often deficient in moral weight of sentiment, and though not remarkable for either the melody or correctness of his versification, he may be considered as having passed the limits of mediocrity.

Of the other contributors our information is so scanty, that we can only mention *Anthony Munday* and *Owen Royden*, and this in consequence of the first having prefixed a copy of verses "In commendation of this Gallery," and the second a more elaborate poem, "To the curious company of Sycophants." It is probable that they were both coadjutors in the body of the work.

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\* Vide *Heliconia*, Part I. Advertisement.



The "Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions" consists of seventy-four poems, and some, especially the "History of Pyramus and Thisbie," of considerable length. Too many of them are written in drawling couplets of fourteen syllables in a line, and with too flagrant a partiality for the meretricious garb of alliteration.\* There appears to be also too little variety in the selection of topics, and some of the pieces are reprinted from "Tottel's Miscellany" and the "Paradyse of Dayntie Devises." It must be pronounced, indeed, inferior to these its predecessors in the essential points of invention, harmony of metre, and versatility of style, though it seems to have shared with them no small portion of popular favour; for Nashe, in his life of Jacke Wilton, 1594, alluding to the Gardens of Rome, says, that "to tell you of their rare pleasures, their baths, their vineyards, their galleries, were to write a second part of the *Gorgious Gallerie of Gallant Devices*."†

In 1584 was published, in 16mo., "A HANDEFULL OF PLEASANT DELITES: containing Sundrie new Sonets and delectable Histories in divers kindes of meeter. Newly devised to the newest tunes, that are now in use to be sung: everie sonet orderly pointed to his proper tune. With new additions of certain songs, to verie late devised notes, not commonly knowen, nor used heretofore. By Clement Robinson: and divers others. At London, printed by Richard Jhones: dwelling at the signe of the Rose and Crowne, neare Holburne Bridge."

Only one copy of the printed original of this Miscellany, which is in the Marquis of Blandford's library, is supposed to be in existence. The editor, Clement Robinson, if all the pieces unappropriated to others, be of his composition, must be deemed worthy of high praise for numerous productions of great lyric sweetness in point of versi-

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\* For a notable instance of this figure, we refer the reader to "The Lover in Bondage," at p. 50. of Mr. Park's reprint. Not Holofernes himself could more "affect the letter."

† Quoted by Mr. Park in the Advertisement to his reprint.

fication, and composed in a vein of much perspicuity with regard to diction. His associates, as far as we have any authority from the work itself, amount only to five; and these, with the exception of *Leonard Gibson*, who claims only one piece, consist of names unknown elsewhere in the annals of poetry. Two effusions are attributed to *J. Tomson*; two to *Peter Picks*; one to *Thomas Richardson*, and one to *George Mannington*. This last production, denominated "A sorrowfull Sonet," if we make allowance for a commencement too alliterative, possesses a large share of moral pathos, and unaffected simplicity. \*

Thirty-two poems occupy the pages of this pleasing little volume, among which, at p. 23., is *A New Courtly Sonet of the Lady Greensleeves, to the new tune of Greensleeves*, alluded to by Shakspeare in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act ii. Sc. 1., and which throws some curious light on the female dress of the period.

In point of interest, vivacity, and metrical harmony, this compilation has a decided superiority over the "Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions." It is, in a great measure, formed of ballads and songs, adapted to well-known popular tunes, and, though its poets have been arbitrarily confined in the structure of their verse by the pre-composed music, yet many of their lyrics have a smoothness and sweetness in the composition of their stanzas, which may even arrest the attention of a modern ear.

To the publication of Clement Robinson succeeded, in 1593, "THE PHŒNIX NEST. Built up with the most rare and refined workes of Noblemen, worthy Knights, gallant Gentlemen, Masters of Arts, and brave Scholers. Full of varietie, excellent invention, and singular delight. Never before published. Set foorth by R. S. of the Inner Temple, Gentleman. Imprinted at London, by John Jackson, 4to."

The opening of Mr. Park's "Advertisement" to his Reprint of this Collection includes so much just, and elegantly expressed, criticism

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\* *Heliconia*, Part II. p. 85.



on our elder poetry, and on Shakspeare, that we seize with pleasure the opportunity of transferring it to our pages.

“Between the Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions,” he remarks, “printed in 1578, and the present miscellany in 1593, an interval of only fifteen years, there will be traced no inconsiderable advance towards poetical elegance and sentimental refinement. Watson, Breton, Peele, and Lodge, contributed very materially to the grace, and melody, and strength, of our amatory, lyric, and satiric verse; while Spenser, Daniel, and Drayton enlarged the sphere of the allegoric, and historic, and descriptive Muse. But the magnitude of the works of the two latter poets, owing to the subjects they unhappily selected, has conduced to deaden that reputation which several of their minor effusions were calculated to keep alive. The very labours which might otherwise have extended their fame, have fatally contracted it. Their ponderous productions are incorporated indeed with the late general collections of British Poets, but where is the poetic amateur who peruses them? They resemble certain drugs in a family-dispensary, which, though seldom if ever taken, still eke out the assemblage. From reading the fair specimens put forth by Mr. Ellis, many may be allured to covet the entire performances of our elder bards: but should these be obtained, they will probably be found (as Mr. Steevens said by the Shakspearian quartos) of little more worth than a squeezed orange. The flowers will appear to have been culled and distilled by the hand of judgment; and the essence of early poetry, like most other essences, will be discovered to lie in a narrow compass. ‘Old poets in general,’ says Mr. Southey, ‘are only valuable because they are old.’ It must be allowed that few poems of the Elizabethan æra are likely to afford complete satisfaction to a mere modern reader, from the fastidious delicacy of modern taste. Some antiquated alloy, either from incongruous metaphor or infelicitous expression, will commonly jar upon his mind or ear. The backward footstep of Time will be audible, if not visible. Yet the songs of our unrivalled Shakspeare combine an almost uniform exception to this remark. They are exquisite in thought, feeling, language,

and modulation. They blend simplicity with beauty, sentiment with passion, picture with poesy. They unite symmetry of form with consistency of ornament, truth of nature with perfection of art, and must ever furnish models for lyric composition. As a sonnet-writer Shakespeare was not superior to some of his contemporaries: he was certainly inferior to himself. In lighter numbers and in blank verse, peculiar and transcendent was his excellence. His songs never have been surpassed, his dramas never are likely to be." \*

Of the editor of the *Phoenix Nest*, intended by the initials R. S., no certain information has been obtained. The work has been attributed to *Richard Stanyhurst*, *Richard Stapleton*, and to *Robert Southwell*, by Coxeter, by Warton, and by Waldron; but their claims, founded merely on conjecture, are entitled to little confidence. It is perhaps more interesting to know, that the chief contributors to this miscellany were among the best lyric poets of their age, that *Thomas Watson*, *Nicholas Breton*, and, above all, *Thomas Lodge*, assisted the unknown editor. Not less than sixteen pieces have the initials of this last bard, and many of them are among the most beautiful productions of his genius. Beside these, *George Peele*, *William Smith*, *Matthew Roydon*, *Sir William Herbert*, the *Earl of Oxford*, and several others, aided in completing this elegant volume.

The "*Phoenix Nest*," which comprehends not less than seventy-nine poems, is certainly one of the most attractive of the Elizabethan miscellanies, whether we regard its style, its versification, or its choice of subject, and will probably be deemed inferior only to "*England's Helicon*," which, indeed, owes a few of its beauties to this work.

Of the valuable Collection thus mentioned, the first edition made its appearance in 1600, with the following title-page: "*ENGLAND'S HELICON*."

Casta placent superis  
pura cum veste venite,  
Et manibus puris  
sumite fontis aquam.

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\* *Heliconia*, Part III. Advertisement.



At London. Printed by J. R. for John Flasket, and are to be sold in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Beare." 4to.

The second edition was published in 1614, and entitled, "England's Helicon, or the Muses Harmony.

The Courts of Kings heare no such straines,  
As daily lull the Rusticke Swaines.

London: Printed for Richard More; and are to be sould at his shop in S. Dunstanes Church-yard." 8vo.

England's Helicon, which, in its first impression, contained one hundred and fifty poems, and in its second one hundred and fifty-nine, has the felicity of enrolling among its contributors all the principal poets of its era. These, enumerated alphabetically, are as follow: — *Richard Barnefield* has two pieces; *Thomas Bastard*, one; *Edmund Bolton*, five; *Nicholas Breton*, eight; *Christopher Brooke*, one; *William Browne*, one; *Henry Constable*, four; *John Davis*, one; *Michael Drayton*, five; *Sir Edward Dyer*, six; *John Ford*, one; *Robert Greene*, seven; *Fulke Grevile*, two; *John Gough*, one; *Howard*, *Earle of Surrie*, two; *Howell*, one; *William Hunnis*, two; *Thomas Lodge*, ten; *Jervis Markham*, two; *Christopher Marlow*, one; *Earle of Oxenford*, one; *George Peele*, three; *Sir Walter Raleigh*, fourteen; *William Shakspeare*, two; *Sir Philip Sidney*, fourteen; *William Smith*, one; *Edmund Spenser*, three; *Shepherd Tonie*, seven; *Thomas Watson*, five; *John Wootton*, two, and *Bartholomew Yong*, twenty-five. Of anonymous contributions there are sixteen.

Amid this galaxy of bards we cannot fail to distinguish for their decided superiority, the productions of *Breton*, *Greene*, *Lodge*, *Marlow*, and *Raleigh*, which might confer celebrity on any selection. The principal feature, indeed, of England's Helicon is its *pastoral* beauty, and in this department how few have surpassed, or even equalled, the exquisite strains of *Lodge* or *Marlow*!

"It cannot be idle or useless," remarks *Sir Egerton Brydges*, "to study this early Collection of Pastoral compositions. Here is the

fountain of that diction, which has since been employed and expanded in the description of rural scenery. Here are the openings of those reflections on the imagery of nature, in which subsequent poets have so much dealt. They show us to what occasional excellence, both in turn of thought and polish of language, the literature of Queen Elizabeth had arrived; and how little the artificial and incumbered prose of mere scholars of that time exhibits a just specimen of either the sentiment or phrase of the court or people! In the best of these productions, even the accentuation and rhythm scarce differs from that of our days. Lodge and Breton in particular, who are characterised by their simplicity, are striking proofs of this!—

“ To such as could enjoy the rough and far-fetched subtlety of metaphysical verses, this Collection must have appeared inexpressibly insipid and contemptible. To those whose business it was to draw similitudes from the most remote recesses of abstruse learning, how childish must seem the delineation of flowers that were open to every eye, and images which found a mirror in every bosom!!

“ But, O, how dull is the intricate path of the philosopher, how uninteresting is all the laboured ingenuity of the artist, compared with the simple and touching pleasures which are alike open to the peasant, as to the scholar, the noble, or the monarch! It is in the gift of exquisite senses, and not in the adventitious circumstances of birth and fortune, that one human being excels another!

“ The common air, the sun, the skies,  
To him are opening Paradise.”

“ We are delighted to see reflected the same feelings, the same pleasures from the breasts of our ancestors. We hear the voices of those bearded chiefs, whose portraits adorn the pannels of our halls and galleries, still bearing witness to the same natural and eternal truths; still inveighing against the pomp, the fickleness, and the treachery of courts; and uttering the songs of the shepherd and the



woodman, in language that defies the changes of time, and speaks to all ages the touching effusions of the heart.

“ If some little additional prejudice in favour of these compositions be given by the association in our ideas of their antiquity, if we connect some reverence, and some increased force, with expressions which were in favourite use with those who for two centuries have slept in the grave, the profound moral philosopher will neither blame nor regret this effect. It is among the most generous and most ornamental, if not among the most useful habits of the mind !

“ Such are among the claims of this Collection to notice. But the seal that has been hitherto put upon this treasure ; the deep oblivion in which the major parts of its contents have for ages been buried, ought to excite curiosity, and impart a generous delight at its revival. Who is there so cold as to be moved with no enthusiasm at drawing the mantle from the figure of Time ? For my part, I confess how often I have watched the gradual developement with eager and breathless expectation ; and gazed upon the reviving features till my warm fancy gave them a glow and a beauty, which perhaps the reality never in its happiest moments possessed.” \*

That very nearly two hundred years should have elapsed between the second and third editions of this miscellany is a striking proof of the neglect to which even the best of our ancient poetry has been hitherto subjected. The rapidly increasing taste of the present age, however, for the reliques of long-departed genius, cannot fail of precluding in future any return of such undeserved obscurity.

In 1600 the industry of Robert Allot presented the public with a large collection of extracts from the most popular poets of his times, under the title of “ ENGLAND’S PARNASSUS : or the choyssest flowers of our moderne poets, with their poeticall comparisons. Descriptions of Bewties, Personages, Castles, Pallaces, Mountaines, Groves, Seas, Springs, Rivers, &c. Whereunto are annexed other various discourses, both pleasant and profitable.” Small 8vo. pp. 510.

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\* England’s Helicon, reprint of 1812, Introduction, p. xx. xxi. xxii.

Had the editor of this curious volume, beside citing the names of his authors, added the titles of the works from which he culled his specimens, an infinity of trouble would have been saved to subsequent research; yet the deficiency has served, in a peculiar manner, to mark the successful progress of modern bibliography. When Oldys wrote his Preface to Hayward's *British Muse*, which was first published in 1738, he complains grievously of this omission, observing that most of Allot's poets "were now so obsolete, that not knowing what they wrote, we can have no recourse to their works, if still extant." \* Since this sentence was written, such has been the industry of our literary antiquaries, that almost every poem which Allot laid under contribution in forming his volume, has been ascertained, and rendered accessible to the curious enquirer; and so far from the writers being obsolete, after nearly eighty years have been added to their antiquity, we may venture to affirm that, excepting about half-a-dozen, they are as familiar to us as the poets of the present reign. It is but just, however, to acknowledge that a considerable portion of this intimacy may be ascribed to Allot's book, which, by its numerous passages from bards rendered scarce by neglect, has stimulated the bibliographical enthusiasm of the last twenty years to achieve their detection. An enumeration of the contributors to England's Parnassus, will serve to illustrate and confirm these remarks:—

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Thomas Achelly.    | 11. Charles Fitzgeffrey.  |
| 2. Thomas Bastard.    | 12. Abraham Fraunce.      |
| 3. George Chapman.    | 13. George Gascoigne.     |
| 4. Thomas Churchyard. | 14. Edward Gilpin.        |
| 5. Henry Constable.   | 15. Robert Greene.        |
| 6. Samuel Daniel.     | 16. Sir John Harrington.  |
| 7. John Davies.       | 17. John Higgins.         |
| 8. Thomas Dekkar.     | 18. Thomas Hudson.        |
| 9. Michael Drayton.   | 19. James, King of Scots. |
| 10. Edmund Fairfax.   | 20. Benjamin Jonson.      |

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\* Preface, pp. 8, 9. This Collection of Hayward's had three different titles; the last dated 1741. The second edition is called "The Quintessence of English Poetry."



- |                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 21. Thomas Kyd.                | 33. Edmund Spenser.     |
| 22. Thomas Lodge.              | 34. Thomas Storer.      |
| 23. Gervase Markham.           | 35. Surrey, Earl of.    |
| 24. Christopher Marlowe.       | 36. Sir Philip Sidney.  |
| 25. John Marston.              | 37. Joshua Sylvester.   |
| 26. Christopher Middleton.     | 38. George Turberville. |
| 27. Thomas Nash.               | 39. William Warner.     |
| 28. Oxford, Earl of.           | 40. Thomas Watson.      |
| 29. George Peele.              | 41. John Weever.        |
| 30. Matthew Roydon.            | 42. William Weever.     |
| 31. Sackville, Lord Buckhurst. | 43. Sir Thomas Wyatt.   |
| 32. William Shakspeare.        |                         |

Though Oldys has severely blamed the judgment of the editor in his selection of authors and extracts, yet a much more consummate critic, the highly-gifted Warton, considers him as having exhibited taste in his choice, and it must be acknowledged that the volume has preserved many exquisite passages from poets who, but for this selection, had probably been irrecoverably merged in oblivion.

In the same year with England's Parnassus came forth another compilation, to which its editor, *John Bodenham*, gave the following title: "BEL-VEDERE, OR THE GARDEN OF THE MUSES.

Quem referent Musæ vivet, dum robora tellus,  
Dum cælum stellas, dum vehit amnis aquas.

Imprinted at London, by F. K. for Hugh Astley, dwelling at Saint Magnus Corner. 1600." Small 8vo. pp. 236.

This collection, which underwent a second impression in 1610, with the omission of its first appellative, *Bel-vedere*, though it contain a vast number of quotations, is, on two accounts, inferior to the "Parnassus." In the first place, no authors' names are annexed to the extracts, and, in the second, a much greater defect has arisen from the editor's determination to confine his specimens to one or two lines at most, a brevity which almost annihilates the interest of the work. To obviate, however, in some degree, the inconveniences arising from the first of these plans, he has recourse, in his *Proemium*, to the following detail, which, as it gives a very curious narrative of the construction of the book, will have its due value with the reader:—

“ Now that every one may be fully satisfied concerning this Garden, that no man doth assume to him-selfe the praise thereof, or can arrogate to his owne deserving those things, which have been derived from so many rare and ingenious spirits; I have set down both how, whence, and where, these flowres had their first springing, till thus they were drawne together into the Muses Garden; that every ground may challenge his owne, each plant his particular, and no one be injured in the justice of his merit.

“ First, out of many excellent speeches, spoken to her Majestie, at tiltings, triumphes, maskes, and shewes, and devises perfourmed in pro grace: as also out of divers choise ditties sung to her; and some especially, proceeding from her owne most sacred selfe! Here are great store of them digested into their meete places, according as the method of the worke plainly delivereth. Likewise out of private poems, sonnets, ditties, and other wittie conceits, given to her honourable Ladies and vertuous Maids of Honour; according as they could be obtained by sight, or favour of copying, a number of most wittie and singular sentences. Secondly, looke what workes of poetrie have been put to the world’s eye, by that learned and right royall king and poet, James King of Scotland; no one sentence of worth hath escaped, but are likewise here reduced into their right roome and place. Next, out of sundrie things extant, and many in private, done by these right honourable persons following:

Thomas, (Henry) Earl of Surrey.

Mary Countess of Pembroke.

The Lorde Marquesse of Winchester.

Sir Philip Sidney.

“ From poems and workes of these noble personages extant:

Edward, Earle of Oxenford.

Sir Edward Dyer.

Ferdinando, Earle of Derby.

Fulke Grevile, Esq.

Sir Walter Raleigh.

Sir John Harrington.

“ From divers essayes of their poetrie; some extant among other honourable personages writings, some from private labours and translations.



Edmund Spencer.	Thomas Churchyard, Esq.
Henry Constable, Esq.	Tho. Nash.
Samuel Daniell.	Tho. Kidde.
Thomas Lodge, Doctor of Physicke.	Geo. Peele.
Thomas Watson.	Robert Greene.
Michael Drayton.	Josuah Sylvester.
John Davies.	Nicolas Breton.
Thomas Hudson.	Gervase Markham.
Henrie Locke, Esq.	Thomas Storer.
John Marstone.	Robert Wilmot.
Chr. Marlowe.	Chr. Middleton.
Benjn. Johnson.	Richard Barnefield.
William Shakspeare.	

“ These being moderne and extant poets, that have lived together: from many of their extant workes, and some kept in private.

Thomas Norton, Esq.	Thomas Atchelow.
George Gascoigne, Esq.	George Whetstones.
Frauncis Hindlemarsh, Esq.	

“ These being deceased, have left divers extant labours, and many more held back from publishing, which for the most part have been perused, and their due right here given them in the Muses Garden.

“ Besides, what excellent sentences have been in any presented Tragedie, Historie, Pastorall, or Comedie, they have been likewise gathered, and are here inserted in their proper places.” \*

It will be perceived that eleven poets are here enumerated, who had no share in England's Parnassus; and it may be worth while to remark, that, among the verses prefixed in praise of the book, are some lines by *R. Hathway*, whom Mr. Malone conjectures to have been the kinsman of *Ann Hathaway*, the wife of our immortal bard. †

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\* The curious Preface, from which we have given this long extract, is only to be found in the first edition of the *Belvedere*; its omission in the second is a singular defect, as it certainly forms the most interesting part of the impression of 1600.

† See Malone's Inquiry.

A small contribution of pieces by a few of the chief poets of the age, was, in 1601, annexed to a production by Robert Chester, entitled, "LOVE'S MARTYR, OR ROSALIN'S COMPLAINT, allegorically shadowing the Truth of Love in the constant fate of the Phoenix and Turtle. A poem, enterlaced with much varietie and raritie ; now first translated out of the venerable Italian Torquato Cæliano, by Robert Chester. With the true legend of famous King Arthur, the last of the nine worthies ; being the first Essay of a new British poet : collected out of authentick records. *To these are added some new compositions of several modern writers ; whose names are subscribed to their severall workes ; upon the first subject ; viz. the Phœnix and Turtle.*"

These *new compositions* have the following second title immediately preceding them: "*Hereafter follow diverse poetical essayes on the former subject ; viz. the Turtle and Phœnix. Done by the best and chiefest of our modern writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes. Never before extant. And now first consecrated by them all generally to the love and merit of the truly noble Knight, Sir John Salisburie.*"

The only known copy of this collection was in Major Pierson's possession, and it is solely from Mr. Malone, to whom we are indebted for the above titles, that we learn the names of the principal contributors ; these are *Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Marston, and Chapman.*\* Shakspeare's contribution forms the twentieth poem in "The Passionate Pilgrim," commencing

" Let the bird of loudest lay," &c.

A miscellany upon a more extensive scale than the preceding, and of great value for the taste exhibited in its selection, succeeded in 1602, under the appellation of "A POETICAL RAPSODÏE ; containing diverse Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigals, Epigrams, Pastorals,

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\* Supplement to Shakspeare, vol. i. p. 732.



Eglogues, with other Poems, both in Rime and Measured Verse.  
For varietie and pleasure, the like never yet published.

The Bee and Spider by a diverse power,  
Sucke hony and poyson from the selfe-same flower.

London. 12mo.'

The editor and principal contributor, was *Francis Davison*, a poet of no mean talents, and son of that Secretary of State, who experienced in so remarkable a degree the duplicity of Elizabeth, in relation to Mary Queen of Scots. In an Address to the Reader, he thus accounts for the form which the volume assumes:—"Being induced by some private reasons, and by the instant entreaty of speciall friends, to suffer some of my worthlesse poems to be published, I desired to make some written by my deere friends *Anonymoi*, and my deerer *Brother*, to beare them company: both, without their consent; the latter being in the low-country warres, and the rest utterly ignorant thereof. My friends names I concealed; mine owne and my brother's, I willed the printer to suppress, as well as I had concealed the other, which he having put in without my privity, we must now undergo a sharper censure perhaps than our namelesse workes should have done; and I especially. For if their poems be liked, the praise is due to their invention; if disliked, the blame both by them and all men will be derived upon me, for publishing that which they meant to suppress."

He then enters upon a defence of poetry, experience proving, he remarks, "by examples of many, both dead and living, that divers delighted and excelling herein, being princes or statesmen, have governed and counselled as wisely; being souldiers, have commanded armies as fortunately; being lawyers, have pleaded as judicially and eloquently; being divines, have written and taught as profoundly; and being of any other profession, have discharged it as sufficiently, as any other men whatsoever;" and concludes by alleging, as an excuse "for these poems in particular, that those under the name of

*Anonymos* were written (as appeareth by divers things to Sir Philip Sidney living, and of him dead) almost twenty years since, when poetry was farre from that perfection to which it hath now attained: that my brother is by profession a souldier, and was not eighteen years old when he writ these toys: that mine owne were made most of them sixe or seven yeares since, at idle times as I journeyed up and downe during my travails."

The division of the "Rapsodie" more peculiarly occupied by these kindred bards, is that including "Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigals, and Epigrams, by Francis and Walter Davison, brethren;" and they were assisted in that, and the residue of the work, by Spenser, Sidney, Sir John Davis, Mary Countess of Pembroke, Thomas Campion, Thomas Watson, Charles Best, Thomas Spelman, and by others, whose initials are supposed to indicate Henry Constable, Walter Raleigh, Henry Wotton, Robert Greene, Andrew Willet, and Joshua Sylvester.\*

The "Poetical Rapsodie" is dedicated by Davison in a sonnet, "To the most noble, honorable, and worthy Lord William Earl of Pembroke, Lord Herbert of Cardiffe, Marmion, and St. Quintine," and was successively republished with augmentations in 1608, 1611, and 1621. It may be said to present us, not only with a felicitous choice of topics, but it claims the merit of having preserved several valuable poems not elsewhere to be discovered, and which, owing to the rarity of the book, although four times subjected to the press, have not, until lately, attracted the notice that is due to them.

Independent of the *ten* miscellanies which we have now enumerated, an immense multitude of *Airs*, *Madrigals*, and *Songs*, set to music, and printed in Parts, were published during the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, and during the reign of James the First. These Collections contain a variety of lyric poems not elsewhere to be met with, and which were either written expressly for the Com-

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\* See *Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 229.



posers, or selected by the latter from manuscripts, or rare and insulated printed copies. Foremost among these Professors of Music, who thus indirectly contributed to enrich the stores of English Poetry, stands *William Byrd*. This celebrated composer's first printed work in English was licensed in 1587, and has the following title:—" *Tenor. Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of sadnes and pietie, made into musicke of five parts: whereof, some of them going a broad among divers, in untrue coppies, are heere truely corrected, and the other being Songs very rare and newly composed, are heere published, for the recreation of all such as delight in Musicke. By William Byrd, one of the Gent. of the Queene's Maiesties Royall Chappell.*" 4to.

The volume is dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton; and he tells his reader, in an epistle subscribed the most assured friend to all that love or learne musicke, William Byrd,—“heere is offered unto thy courteous acceptation, musicke of sundrie sorts, and to content divers humors. If thou bee disposed to pray, heere are psalmes. If to bee merrie, heere are sonets. If to lament for thy sins, heere are songs of sadnesse and pietie. If thou delight in musicke of great cōpasse, heere are divers songs, which beeing originally made for instruments to expresse the harmony, and one voyce to pronounce the dittie, are now framed in all parts for voyces to sing the same. If thou desire songs of smal compasse and fit for the reach of most voyces, heere are most in number of that sort.”

Next to Byrd, whose publications of this kind are numerous, we may mention *Thomas Morley*, no less remarkable for his skill in music, and for his fertility in the production of *madrigals, ballets, and canzonets*. How fashionable and universal had become the practice of singing these compositions at every party of amusement, may be drawn from one of the elementary works of this writer:—“Being at a banquet,” he relates, “supper being ended, and music books brought to table, the mistress of the house, *according to custom*, presented me with a part, earnestly intreating me to sing; when, after many excuses, I protested unfeignedly that I could not, every

*one began to wonder, yea, some whispered to others demanding how I was brought up."* \*

Of the various collections of lyric poetry adapted to music and published by Morley, who died about the period of the accession of James the First, we shall notice two ; one as indicatory of the manners of the age, and the other of the estimation in which the science was held by our composer, who seems, on this occasion, to have partaken the enthusiasm of Shakspeare; for in a dedication, "To the Worshipfull Sir Gervis Clifton, Knight," prefixed to "*Madrigals to five voyces. Selected out of the best approved Italian Authors. By Thomas Morley, Gentleman of hir Maiesties Royall Chappell, 1598,*" he tells his worthy patron, "I ever held this sentence of the poet, as a canon of my creede ; *That whom God loveth not, they love not Musique.* For as the Art of Musique is one of the most Heavenly gifts, so the very love of Musique (without art) is one of the best engrafted testimonies of Heavens love towards us."

In 1601, Morley published in quarto, "Cantus Madrigales. The triumphes of Oriana, to 5 and 6 voices : composed by divers severall aucthors,"—a collection remarkable for its object, as it consisted of twenty-five songs, composed by twenty-four several musicians, for the express purpose of commemorating the beauty and virginity of Elizabeth, under the appellation of Oriana, and who was now in the sixty-eighth year of her age, one, among innumerable proofs, of the extreme vanity of this singular woman.

That a great proportion of these musical miscellanies consisted of translations from the Italian, is evident from the publications of *Byrd* and *Morley*, and from the *Musica Transalpina* of *Nicolas Yonge*, printed in two parts, in the years 1588 and 1597, where, however, equal industry appears to have been exerted in collecting English songs ; the dedication, indeed, points out very distinctly the sources

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\* Vide Morley's *Plaine and easie Introduction to Practical Musick*.



whence these popular works were derived. "I endeavoured," says Yonge, "to get into my hands all such English songes as were praise worthie, and amongst others I had the hap to find in the hands of some of my good friends certaine Italian Madrigales translated most of them five years ago by a gentleman for his private delight." The two parts of *Musica Transalpina* contain eighty-one songs.

It seems probable, indeed, from *Orlando Gibbons's* dedication of his "First set of Mardrigals and Mottets" to Sir Christopher Hatton, dated 1612, that the courtiers of that period sometimes employed themselves in writing lyrics for their domestic Lutenists; for Orlando tells his lord,—“They were most of them composed in your own house, and do therefore properly belong unto you as lord of the soil; *the language they speak you provided them*; I only furnished them with tongues to utter the same.” It may be, however, that Sir Christopher was only a selector of poetry for the lyre of Gibbons.

To enumerate the multitude of music-stricken individuals, who, during this period, were occupied in procuring and collecting lyric poetry for professional purposes, would fill a volume. Among the most indefatigable, may be mentioned *John Wilbye*, *Thomas Weelkes*, *John Dowland* and *Robert Jones*; "*The Musicall Dream*," 1609, and "*The Muse's Gardin of Delights*," 1610, by the last of these gentlemen, were held in great esteem.

We cannot close this subject, indeed, without acknowledging our obligations to this numerous class for the preservation of many most beautiful specimens of lyric poetry, which, it is highly probable, without their care and accompaniments, would either not have existed, or would have perished prematurely. \*

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\* For specimens of these interesting collections, I refer my reader to *Censura Literaria*, vol. ix. p. 1. et seq.; vol. x. pp. 179. 294.; and to the *British Bibliographer*, No. IV. p. 343.; No. V. p. 563.; No. VI. p. 59.; No. IX. p. 427.; No. XI. p. 652.; No. XII. p. 48.; and No. XV. p. 386. A well-chosen selection from the now scarce volumes of these Professors of Vocal Music would be a valuable present to the lovers of English poetry.

As a further elucidation of the Poetical Literature of this period, and with the view of condensing its retrospect, by an arrangement under general heads, it may prove satisfactory, if we briefly throw into classes, the names of those poets who may be considered as having given ornament or extension to their art. The following divisions, it is expected, will include all that, in this place, it can now be necessary to notice.

<i>Epic Poetry.</i>	<i>Historic.</i>	<i>Lyric.</i>	<i>Didactic.</i>	<i>Satiric.</i>	<i>Sonnet.</i>	<i>Pastoral.</i>	<i>Translators.</i>
Spenser.	Sackville. Higgins. Niccols. Warner. Daniel. Drayton. Shakspeare. Marlow. Fitzgeffrey. Storer. Willobie. Beaumont.	Gascoigne. Greene. Raleigh. Breton. Lodge. Shakspeare. Jonson. Wotton. Wither.	Tusser. Davies Sir J. Davors. Fletcher G.	Lodge. Hall. Marston. Donne. Wither.	Spenser. Sidney. Constable. Watson. Shakspeare. Daniel. Drayton. Barnes. Barnefield. Smith. Stirling. Drummond.	Spenser. Chalkhill. Marlow. Drayton. Faifax. Brown.	Chapman. Harrington. Fairfax. Sylvester. Golding.

We have thus, in as short a compass as the nature of the subject would admit, given, we trust, a more accurate view of the poetry of the Shakspearean era, as it existed independent of the Drama, than has hitherto been attempted.

That Shakspeare was an assiduous reader of English Poetry; that he studied with peculiar interest and attention his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, there is abundant reason to conclude from a careful perusal of his volume of miscellaneous poetry, which is modelled on a strict adherence to the taste which prevailed at the opening of his career. The collection, indeed, may, with no impropriety, be classed under the two divisions of *Historic* and *Lyric* poetry; the former concluding "Venus and Adonis," and the "Rape of Lucrece," and the latter the "Sonnets," the "Passionate Pilgrim," and the "Lover's Complaint."

The great models of Historic poetry, during the prior portion of Shakspeare's life, were the "Mirror for Magistrates" and "Warner's Albion's England;" but for the mythological story of Venus and



Adonis, though deviating in several important circumstances from its prototype, we are probably indebted to Golding's Ovid ; and for the Rape of Lucrece and the structure of the stanza in which it is composed, to the reputation and the metre of the *Rosamond* of Daniel, printed in 1592. For the Sonnets, he had numerous examples in the productions of Spenser, Sidney, Watson, and Constable ; and, through the wide field of amatory lyric composition, excellence of almost every kind, in the form of ode, madrigal, and song, might be traced in the varied effusions of Gascoigne, Greene and Raleigh, Breton and Lodge.

How far our great bard exceeded, or fell beneath, the models which he possessed ; in what degree he was independent of their influence, and to what portion of estimation his miscellaneous poetry is justly entitled, will be the subjects of the next chapter, in which we shall venture to assign to these efforts of his early days a higher rank in the scale of excellence than it has hitherto been their fate to obtain.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



















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Shakespeare and his times

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